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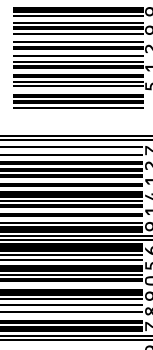
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THE LIFE AND TIMES
OF IGOR IVANOV



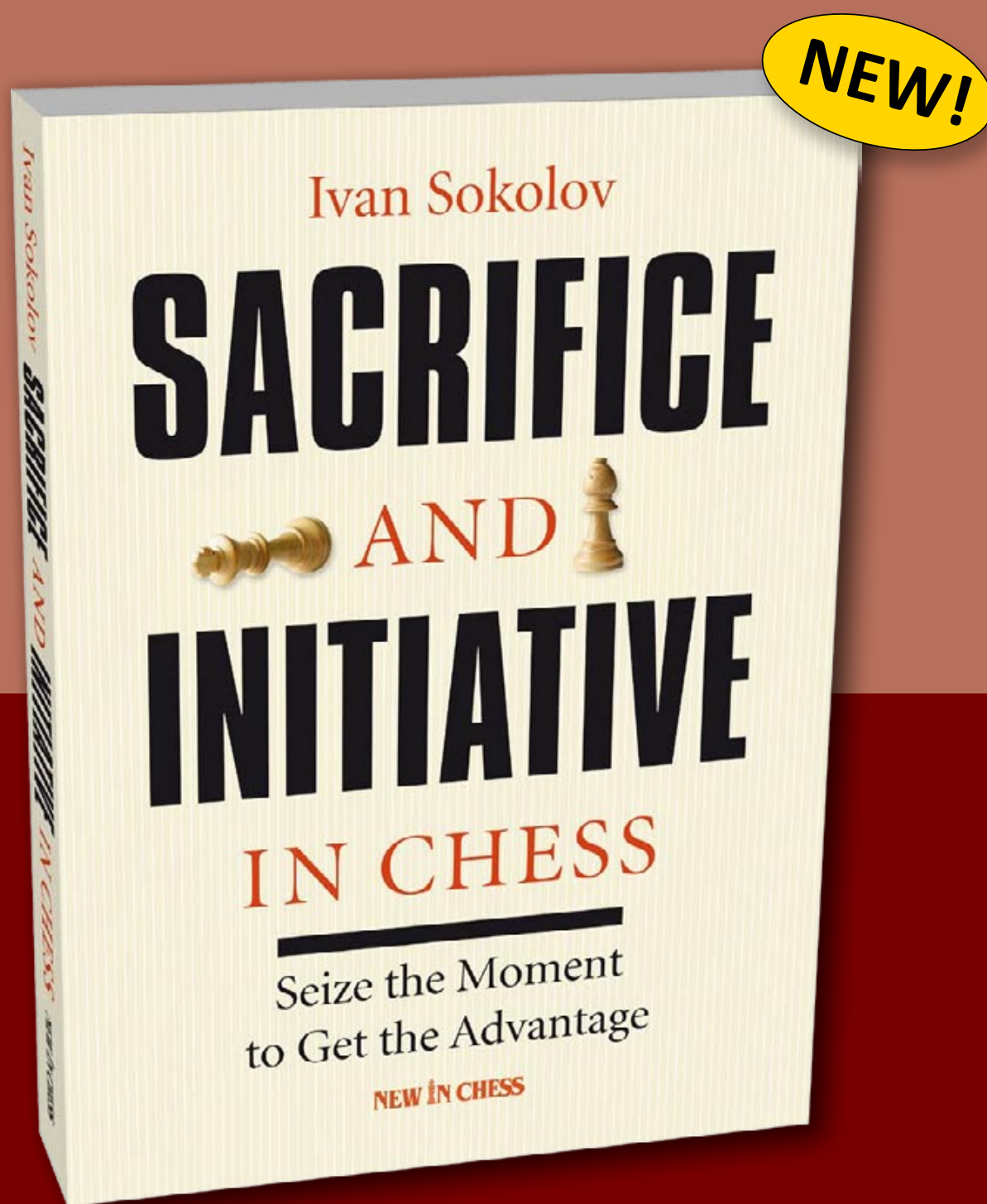
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“A sacrifice is the natural product of the initiative”

– Ivan Sokolov

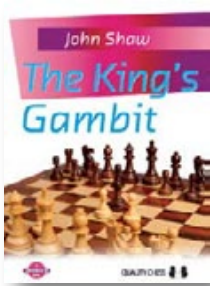


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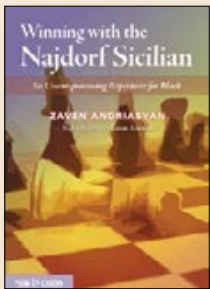
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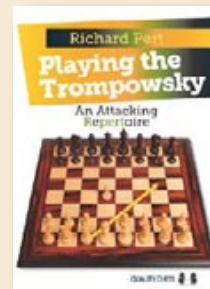
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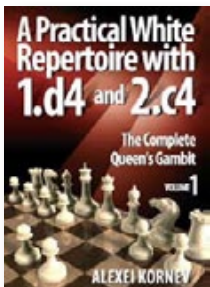
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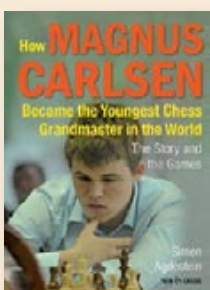
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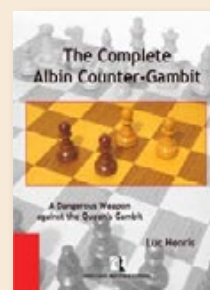
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As Boris Gelfand deservedly claimed one of his biggest successes ever, the rest of the old guard at the Tal Memorial failed dramatically. Struggling from day one, Vishy Anand and Vladimir Kramnik sensationally ended up at the bottom of the table. Magnus Carlsen finished in second place, but the Norwegian criticized his play as 'too indifferent'. Hikaru Nakamura proudly led the field after six rounds and then collapsed completely.

42 Interview: Boris Gelfand

At 45 years of age and buoyant after one of his finest successes ever, Boris Gelfand happily cites Viktor Kortchnoi, who told him a long time ago that he reached the pinnacle of his career at 47.

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Tal Memorial



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Jan Timman

'Probably when I was ten or something, the book by Yury Razuvaev, *Akiba Rubinstein*, was published. I'd come back from school, would lie on the sofa and read the book without a board. Day after day. And I know of other players who did the same with this book or other books. That's how the views on chess were formed in those days.' – Boris Gelfand



Just Checking

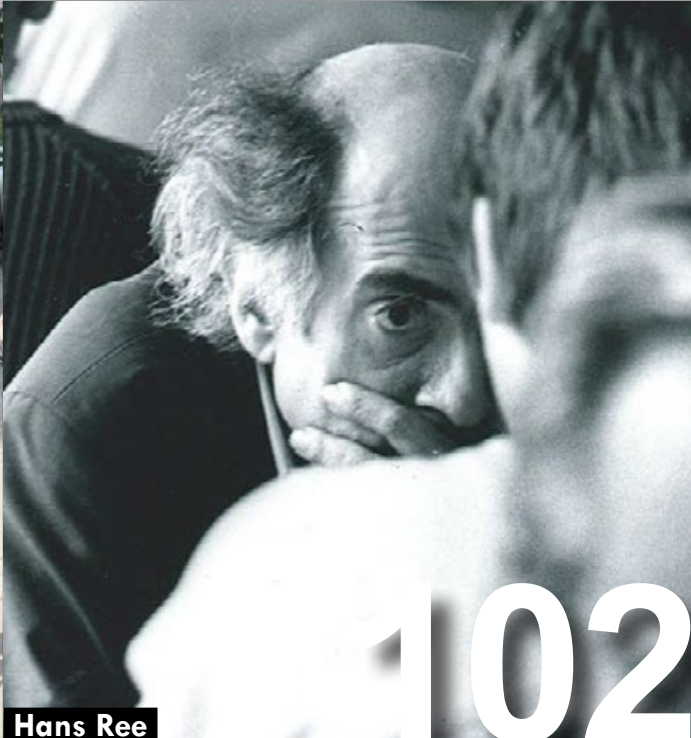
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COVER PHOTO

Boris Gelfand: New In Chess



Why did you do that?

Cheating has never been one of our favourite topics. Not only because it's pathetic, but mostly because we believe that in top chess it's much less of an issue than some people want us to believe. Whenever unfair play is discovered, it's almost always in open tournaments or other large-scale events where it is practically impossible to prevent all forms of cheating. Which doesn't mean that you shouldn't try to protect the majority of players of good will against a handful of wet blankets, but it's well-nigh impossible to create one-hundred per cent waterproof measures at mass events, as the newly created FIDE/ACP anti-cheating commission will no doubt find out (if they hadn't already). We on our part believe, naive as that may sound, that it's largely about education and civilization.

Still, it's hard not to write about the case of Borislav Ivanov, if only because respected contributors like Magnus



Borislav Ivanov on Slavi's Show.
What does he want to tell us?

Carlsen and Nigel Short mention him in this issue, while many of our readers may never have heard of him. So, who is this Bulgarian, who is reviled by almost anyone that ever played him? Who was banned by the Bulgarian Chess Federation for four months and then was let off the hook when he didn't show up for a 'scientific investigation' at the headquarters of the BCF? Who made headlines in his

country and appeared in the popular Slavi's Show, where he smilingly protested his innocence?

As a chess player, Borislav Ivanov, who was born in 1987, cannot be called very stable. While not so long ago his tournament performances hovered between 1900 and 2200, he suddenly made quite a leap forward at the Zadar Open in Croatia last December, where he beat 4 GMs and had a performance of 2697. This sensational result apparently affected his sleep, as only two months later at the Tringov Open in Plovdiv he lost to two players under 2000 and had to settle for a sad 1942 performance. But one month later he was beating grandmasters again, reaching a performance of 2696 at a rapid tournament in Villava, Spain. By now opponents began to refuse to play him or even cancelled their participation if they knew Ivanov was around. His games were examined and as expected it was found that he played an extraordinary high number of first computer moves. Which didn't seem to cost him much effort. As his opponents testified, he doesn't seem to think, just looks at the board intently and after some 10 seconds he makes his moves. Strong moves, in a wide variety of openings.

So, the question is not whether Borislav Ivanov is cheating, but how he does it. And this, in fact, is the worrying bit, as we don't really know. Once he was searched and his pen was taken from him, but that didn't affect his play. Is Google testing the unavoidable sequel to Google Glass on him, Google Lens? Not very likely, as Google would not want to be involved in this kind of cheating, but it's the kind of high-tech you tend to think of.

Perhaps the question why he does it is as intriguing as how he does it. A real cheat doesn't want you to know that he's deceiving you, but apparently that doesn't concern Ivanov, otherwise he would have gone about his business much more subtly and grown in strength much more gradually. There is nothing subtle in his approach.

He knows that he can never earn big money this way, let alone become World Champion, as he boasted in an interview. Here we see a man who almost shouts at us that he is cheating and laughs at us for not knowing how he does it. Why?

How did you do that?

When Garry Kasparov lost to Deep Blue in 1997, his concern was not why IBM's supercomputer had beaten him, but how. The strongest player on the planet couldn't believe that Deep Blue had found all the moves it played. Some he said were 'too human', and he accused the IBM team of human interference. The most famous Man vs. Machine encounter of all time is the subject of



Kenneth Lee is Feng-Hsiung Hsu in *The Machine*.

a play written by Matt Charman, *The Machine*, which premiered in Manchester and will be performed in New York at Park Avenue Armory from September 4 to 17. Charman's original idea was to write about the fight between a man and a machine, but his perspective gradually shifted. As the play's press agent puts it: 'An international celebrity and the undisputed master of his art, Kasparov came to America for freedom and glory. What he didn't expect to confront was the lifelong dedication of another man, Deep Blue's wunderkind inventor Dr Feng-Hsiung Hsu. Both geniuses, they staked their reputations on the tournament. What followed was one of the most compelling stories of our time.'

Karjakin fast in Kiev

Ever since the demise of the Foros tournaments, international 'super' events have become a rarity in Ukraine. But if it's up to the people behind the Sberbank Rapid in Kiev, the first edition of their tournament marks a new tradition. The participants were selected from countries where Sberbank is active and included Topalov (Bulgaria), Karjakin (Russia), Leko (Hungary), Naiditsch (Germany) and guest of honour, former World Champion Anatoly Karpov. The event was held in 'Olympic', the main sports arena of Ukraine. Some of the participants even sneaked out to walk on the pitch where stars like Xavi and Iniesta had played the final of Euro 2012, only to be chased off by officials who feared they might do damage to the immaculate pitch.

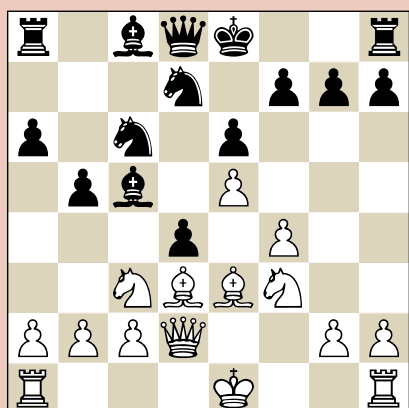
Pavel Eljanov had a double role: he not only played, but was also a member of the organizing committee. He beat both Sergey Karjakin and Veselin Topalov, but these losses could not stop the top-seeds from dominating the proceedings. After nine lively rounds Karjakin took first prize, half a point ahead of his Bulgarian rival. Their direct encounter proved decisive.

FR 4.4 – C11

Sergey Karjakin
Veselin Topalov

Kiev Sberbank Rapid 2013 (4)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 a6 8.♚d2 b5 9.dxc5 ♙xc5 10.♙d3 White's idea is to withdraw the black-squared bishop to f2 after 10...♚b6. 10...d4?!



Not as strong as it looks. 11. ♘xd4! ♘xd4 12.♘e4! The point. 12...♚h4+ 13.♙f2 ♚g4? This doesn't work for Black, but 13...♘xc2+



Football fans Eljanov, Tomashevsky, Ipatov and Karjakin couldn't resist the temptation to smell the pitch where Xavi had shone.

or 13...♘f3+ didn't look too inviting either. 14.♙xd4! ♙xd4 15.♘d6+ ♙e7 16.♙e4 ♙xb2 17.♚b1 ♙a3 18.♙xa8 ♙c5 19.♙f3 ♚g6 20.♘e4 ♚d8 21.♚d1 ♙b6 22.♚b4+ Black resigned.

Working class heroes

Sergey Karjakin blamed his busy schedule, including the rapid event in Kiev, for his lacklustre performance at the Tal Memorial. As you can read in our feature article, Karjakin wasn't the only one struggling with too many commitments. Hikaru Nakamura and Vladimir Kramnik were also craving for some rest at the end of their adventures in the Russian capital. Yet both of them, together with Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, travelled on to Geneva, where only two days later they joined Etienne Bacrot, Judit Polgar, Romain Edouard, Yannick Pelletier and Alexandra Kosteniuk at the Geneva Masters.

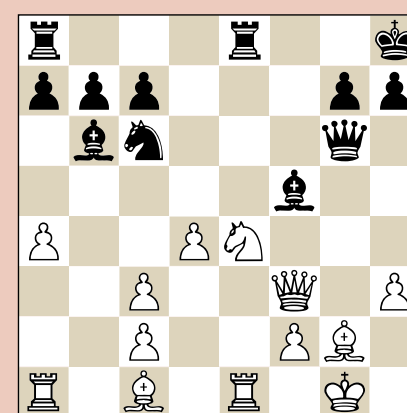
Given their class, it didn't come as a total surprise that all three Tal participants plus Bacrot made it to the semi-finals of this rapid event. The final was contested between Vladimir Kramnik and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov and ended in victory for the Rapid World Champion from Azerbaijan. The first game decided the issue.

SO 1.8 – C46

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Vladimir Kramnik

Geneva Masters 2013 (final-1)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g3 d5 5.exd5 ♘xd5 6.♙g2 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♙c5 8.0-0 0-0 9.♚e1 ♙b6 10.d3 ♚e8 11.a4 ♙g4 12.h3 ♙h5 13.g4 ♙g6 14.♘d2 ♚h4 With this and his next move Black declares his intentions. 15.♚e2 f5 16.♘f3 ♚f6 17.gxf5 ♙xf5 18.♘g5 e4 19.d4 ♙h8 20.♘xe4 ♚g6 21.♚f3



21...♚f8? After 21...♚e6 followed by ...♚ae8, it looks as if Black would have enough compensation for the pawn. 22.♚g3 ♚xg3? This queen exchange not only alleviates White's defensive task, it also leaves him with the nasty threat of ♙xc6 and a5. 23. ♘xg3 ♙a5 24.♙xc6 ♙xc3 25.



Rapid ace Mamedyarov beat Kramnik in Geneva.

♙xb7 ♚ab8 26.♙a3 ♚f6 27.♘xf5 ♙xa1 28.♚xa1 ♚xb7 29.♘e3 White is material up, and although the road to victory was bumpy and far from straight, Mamedyarov managed to win in 60 moves. ■



Emoticons

At the risk of sounding like the mythical 'Outraged of Tunbridge Wells' ☹, may I please beg you to outlaw the use of these stupid little squiggles, which I believe are known as 'emoticons', in the pages of your mighty organ? This ghastly phenomenon is both juvenile and the product of typical 21st century 'dumbing down'. Given that all of your readers are (presumably) English speakers, they should not need a tiny picture of a grinning oaf, just to make them aware that the writer has made a joke. Likewise, a writer who has just written something which is not intended to be taken seriously should not need such a stupid squiggle to alert readers to this fact – if he or she is unsure whether their

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words are clear enough to convey the intended meaning, he or she should re-write the sentence in question. The otherwise admirable Anish Giri is a particular culprit, whose emoticonal logorrhea ☺ renders his reports quite unreadable.

Yours in emoticonal fury ☹,
 Steve Giddins
 Rochester, United Kingdom

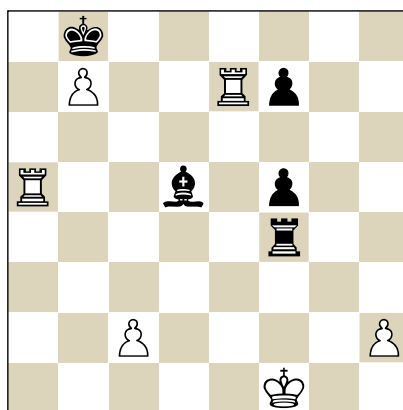
The power of influence

As Axel Herms points out in his reader's letter in *New In Chess* 2013/3, I have blatantly broken the laws of chess when annotating move 39 in the game Adams-Durao. Yes, I admit it. I was in such a hurry to get my king to h3, to show everybody a particularly neat self-mate, that I took an illegal shortcut and placed my king in check on the g2-square!

I think if I had actually played 39. ♖g2 on the board, and my oppo-

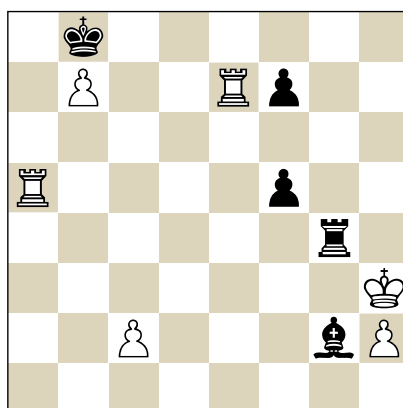
nent had replied bishop takes king and claimed the game, the Monte Carlo organisers would have best placed me on suicide watch for the rest of the tournament.

Well, anyway, just for the record, after 38... ♖xf4+, the moves should have read



39. ♖g1 ♖g4+ 40. ♖f2 ♖f4+ 41. ♖g3 ♖g4+ 42. ♖h3 ♖g2
 Mate.

By travelling along the dark squares, my king would have dodged the bullets fired by the black queen's bishop and arrived safely on the edge of the board... only to await his own execution.



What I like here is the *economy* of the final mating position and the teamwork of Black's forces: his pawn covers the rook which in turn covers the bishop – and White's h2-pawn blocks in his own king.

■ ■ ■

Three years after the Monte Carlo tournament I visited a traditional Spring Holiday Chess Congress held in Ilford, on the outskirts of London. There, I played the following practice

game with Sid Kalinsky – a high board county player and also the boss of a West End accountancy firm by name of 'King and King'. If you applied for a job with his company, you would not only be asked to declare your book-keeping qualifications, but also your chess rating. You see, Sid would only employ good chess players, as he wanted to ensure his firm won the London Commercial Chess League every year!

SI 48.4 – B20
Sid Kalinsky
Jimmy Adams
 Ilford 1970

1.e4 c5 2.b4

In keeping with his Russian roots, my opponent admired the exciting chess style of Mikhail Chigorin. At the time, the daring Wing Gambit was his favoured choice against the Sicilian and I wanted to try out a new idea to combat it...

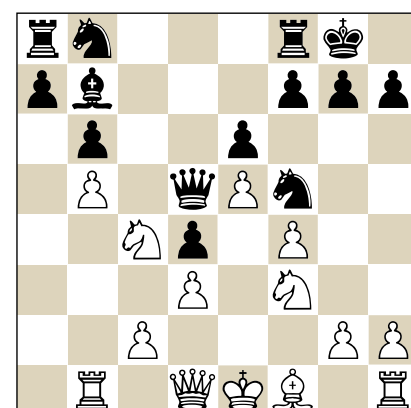
2...cxb4 3.a3 b6!?

I noticed that this move is not included in Alexey Bezgodov's detailed monograph, published in 2004, *Challenging the Sicilian with 2 a3*, into which line this game has transposed. If 3...b6 also does not appear in any computer databases, then I just might claim it as my own – and name it the Adamsky Variation.

4.axb4 ♖b7 5.d3 e6 6.b5 d5 7. e5 d4 8. ♖a3 ♖d5 9.f4 ♖xa3 10. ♖xa3 ♖e7 11. ♖c4 ♖f5

Not 11... ♖xb5? 12. ♖d6+.

12. ♖b1 0-0 13. ♖f3



13... ♖d7

Keep a close watch on this bandit.

When I originally commented on this game in *Bayswater Chess*, a magazine I edited in the 70s, I named him 'McQueen Knight – gun for hire.' As the continuation of the game shows, he is just like one of those Wild West bounty hunters, riding the dusty trail in search of a reward for the capture of a wanted man – dead or alive.

14.♙e2 ♘c5 15.0-0 ♞a4 16.♚d2 ♞c3 17.♞a1 ♞xb5 18.♞fb1 ♞fc8 19.♞b2 ♞c3

McQueen Knight lays patiently in wait, until the opportunity arises for him to ambush the royal couple.

20.♞b3 ♞c5 21.♞ba3 ♞b5 22.♞xa7 ♞xa7 23.♞xa7 ♞b1+ 24.♙f2 ♙c6 25.♞c7

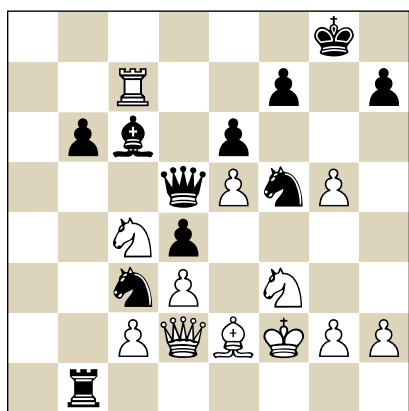
Most of the chess men are clustered together in the centre – apart from those two rooks dug in behind enemy lines and which present continual danger to their respective opponents. White is first to threaten mate – by 26.♞c8+.

25...g5 (! and ?)

I decided to give my king a flight square by playing a striking move that would demand White's undivided attention – and then I could safely carry out my latent threat.

26.fxg5

Another mate appears – this time from the other side. If 26.♞xg5 ♚xg2 mate.



26...♚xc4 (! and ?)

Flipping the board shows just how similar this motif is to the Durao game, where, as White, I played ♚xf5 and, after ...exf5, forked king and queen with my knight on d5. I

would have thought that I'd have more chance of winning the National Lottery than pulling off this unusual sacrifice for a second time.

27.dxc4?

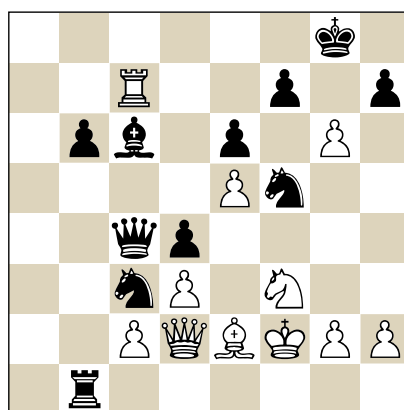
There really must be some truth in the theory that players tend to overlook backward knight moves.

27...♞e4 Mate.

It seems only right that McQueen Knight, who has travelled so far on the long and winding road, b8-d7-c5-a4-c3-b5-c3, should now collect his bounty. In fact he should be paid a little extra reward money as he has apprehended not just 'King and King' but 'King and Queen'.

■ ■ ■

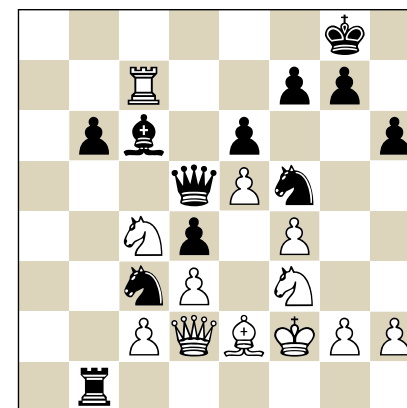
Some weeks later: Much to my surprise I received a reader's letter. Someone had written in to tell me that my 'brilliant' queen sacrifice should in fact have *lost*, and McQueen Knight should have gone home empty-handed! The reader explained that White could have refused to accept the queen sacrifice and forced victory by playing, instead of 27.dxc4, the surprising 27.g6!!.



Then 27...hxc6 28.♞c8+ ♙h7 (28...♙g7 29.♞g5 intending 30.♞f6+ and 31.♞h8 mate) 29.♞g5+ ♙g7 30.dxc4 – now that the e4-square is covered!; or 27...fxg6 28.♞c8+ ♙g7 29.♞g5 threatening 30.♞f6+ ♙h6 31.♞c7 and 32.♞g5 mate. What a turnaround that would have been! The heroic black queen had suddenly become a liability.

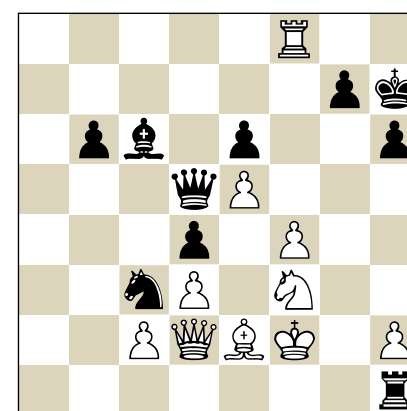
■ ■ ■

Anyway, after getting over the initial shock, I looked for a better way to continue and, instead of 25...g5, switched my thoughts to the sensible 25...h6, which equally gave my king an escape square.



Then if 26.g4 (what else?) 26...♚xc4! 27.gxf5 ♚d5 28.fxe6 fxe6 29.♞c8+ ♙h7 and White will have to give up the exchange by 30.♞xc6 otherwise the power of the queen and bishop battery on the a8-h1 diagonal will be too strong.

For example: 30.♞f8 ♞h1!.



The threat is 31...♞xh2+! 32.♞xh2 (32.♙e1 ♞xe2+) 32...♞g2+ 33.♙e1 ♞g3+ 34.♙f1 ♙g2+! 35.♙g1 ♙h3+ 36.♙h1 ♞g2 mate.

If play continues 31.♙g3 (31.♙g2 ♞xe2 32.♞xe2 ♞e1! 33.♞xe1 ♞xf3+ or 33.♞f2 ♞e3 wins) then 31...♞f1! (threatening 32...♞xf3+ and if 32.♙xf1 then 32...♞xf3+ 33.♙h4 g5+ wins) 32.♞h4.

Now readers, please let me have my fantasy as I set what chess composers call a 'task problem'.



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ity to the position on the board. Access to a whole heap of endings with the same distribution of material on modern 64-Bit systems is gained in a few seconds only. And what works with endgames can also be transferred to mid-game positions. In this case too, a search is instigated for pawn structures which are almost similar to the position on the board and the similarity is considered on the basis of the position of the pieces.

More improvements:

- Online player encyclopedia with Elo ratings, upgraded throughout the year
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- New engine dialog with CPU-optimisation
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System requirements: Minimum: Minimum: Pentium III 1 GHz, 1 GB RAM, Windows Vista, XP (Service Pack 3), DirectX9 graphics card with 256 MB RAM, DVD-ROM drive, Windows Media Player 9 and Internet access to activate the program, Playchess.com, Let’s Check, Engine Cloud and updates.

Recommended: PC Intel Core i7, 2.8 GHz, 4 GB RAM, Windows 7 (64 Bit) or Windows 8 (64 Bit), DirectX10 graphics card (or compatible) with 512 MB RAM or more, 100% DirectX10 compatible sound card, Windows Media Player 11, DVD ROM drive and Internet access to activate the program, Playchess.com, Let’s Check, Engine Cloud and updates.



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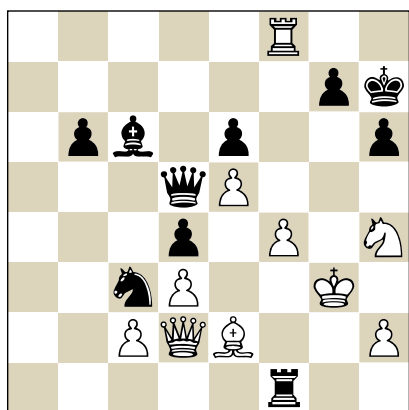


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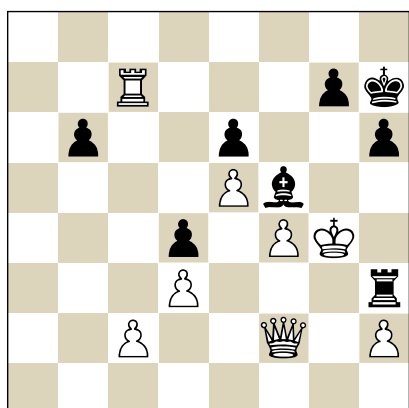
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Question: How can Black, by means of a queen sacrifice, create a rook, bishop and pawn mating pattern similar to that which could have occurred in the Durao game?

Answer: By 32...♞xe2+ 33.♞xe2 ♞h1 and if, say, 34.♞c8 then 34...♞e1! 35.♞f2 ♞e3+ 36.♞g4 ♞d1+ 37.♞f3 ♞xf3+ (37...♞xf3 may be objectively stronger but it will not fulfil the 'task') 38.♞h4 ♞e4! 39.♞c7 (39.dxe4 g5+ 40.fxg5 ♞xe4+ 41.♞g3 ♞g4 mate) 39...♞h5+!! (this time White cannot decline the queen sacrifice) 40.♞xh5 ♞h3+ 41.♞g4 (41.♞h4 ♞f3 mate) 41...♞f5 mate.



Mission accomplished. The same pieces co-operate to checkmate the white king as in the Durao game. But here the pawn defends the bishop which in turn protects the rook – and at the same time checkmates the king. A white pawn blocks the king's escape on a dark square – and the black pawn which had given its own king a flight square now denies White's an exit via g5.

Conclusion: This little postscript to my Monte Carlo article illustrates the

positive and negative effects of influence. To be explicit: I was influenced by a particular kind of queen sacrifice that won against Durao but should have lost against Kalinsky. If I had not been so influenced, I could have checkmated Kalinsky in much the same way as Durao could have checkmated me.

Jimmy Adams,
London, England

A dear memory

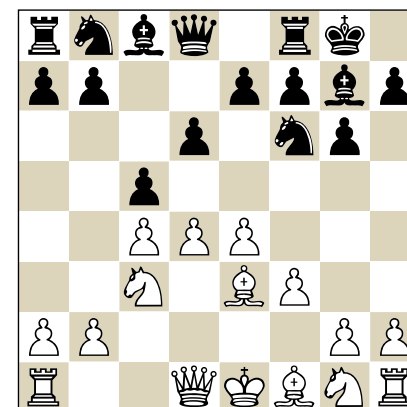
Although I stopped playing chess in 1983, I have been subscribing to your wonderful magazine continuously, lifelong. In New In Chess 2013/3, Jan Timman writes about Peter Svidler, the most entertaining player in the London Candidates', which is among the greatest chess tournaments ever. The dream website is a beautiful gift to chess lovers all over the world, with the impressive interviews by Anastasiya Karlovich as a peak.

Jan writes (on page 100) that after 1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.♞c3 ♞g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♞e3, Sax gave him a surprise in 1985, when he played the immediate 6...c5, knowing games that Jan did not know. Jan points out that there were no databases then. Some readers may have erroneously thought that Jan was surprised by 6...c5, 10 years after its appearance in Karpov-Barle (1975) and other games. This would be a misunderstanding. The surprise concerned the later move 10...♞d7.

I add a game clarifying Timman's thoughts about this opening line in those days. It is a game that Jan knew but Sax did not, and that would not even be recoverable from databases even today because it was only a rapid game. Such games are to be taken less seriously than regular games, all the more so because the black player in the following game, being me, was a weak amateur. But it pertains to the opening variation discussed by Timman to such an extent, and illustrates the depth of his opening knowledge in such a manner, that I will gladly

show it to your readers. The game is a dear memory from my youth.

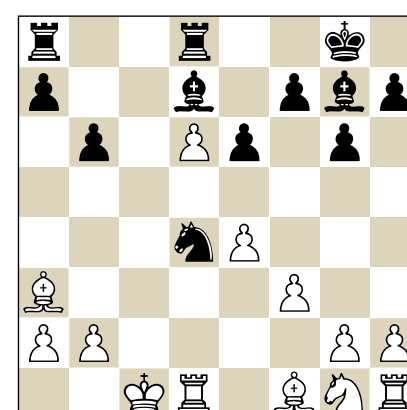
The game Timman-Wakker, Rabo Rapid Tournament, Nijmegen, February 10, 1979, continued



position after 6...c5

7.dxc5 dxc5 8.♞xd8 ♞xd8 9. ♞xc5 ♞c6 10.♞d5 ♞xd5 11.cxd5 b6! 12.♞a3 ♞d4 13.0-0 e6 14. d6

The main line in those days was 14. ♞e2 ♞b5, with a white advantage. After the game I asked Jan why he had not played the main line. He replied that Black then equalizes after 14... ♞xe2+ and 15...ed5. I was impressed because I had prepared these equalizing moves as my novelty, thinking to be a step ahead of the theory. Bad luck that Jan was one more step ahead. After my prepared **14...♞d7** Jan surprised me with the subtle



15.♞b1!

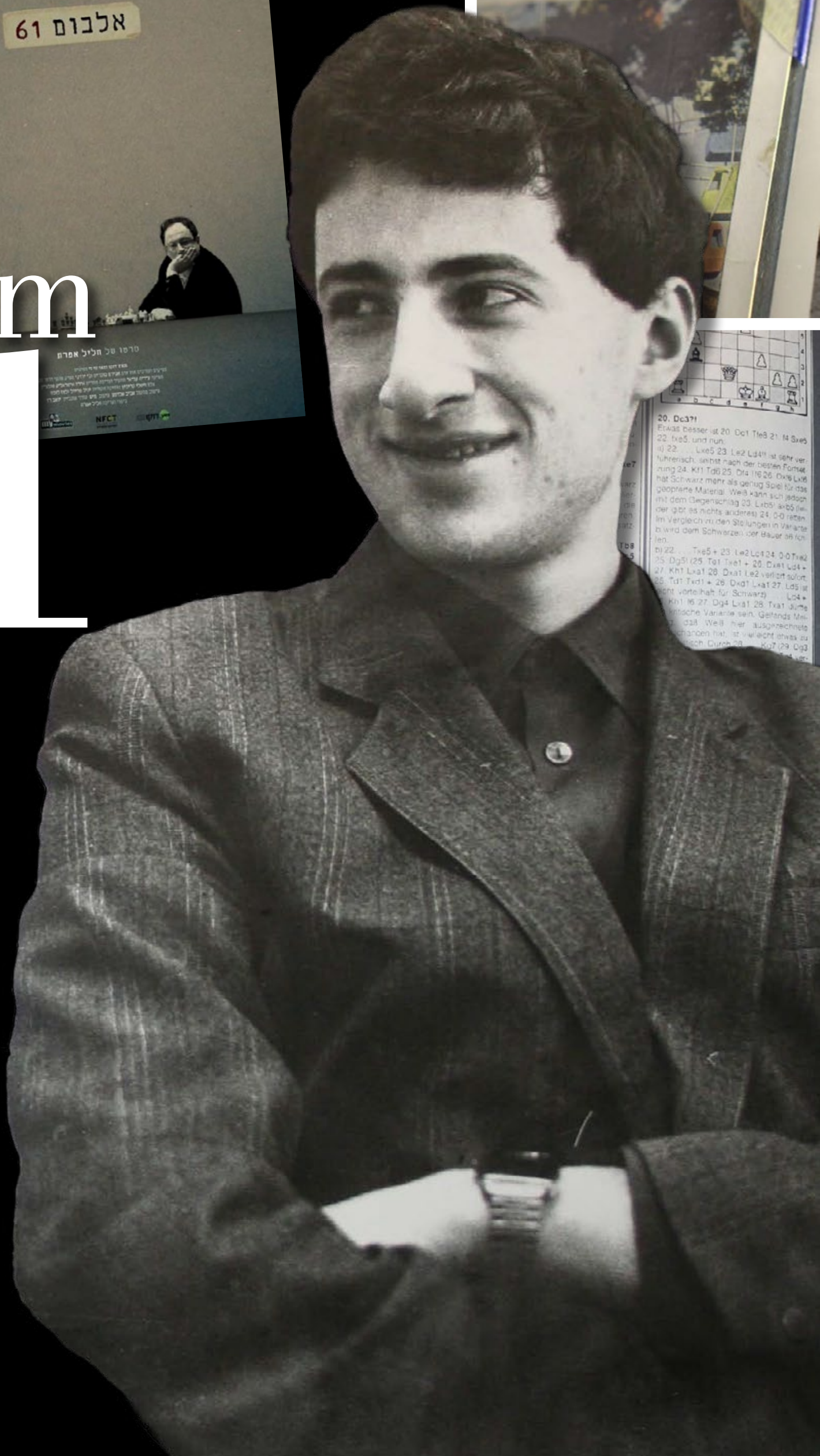
Despite extensive prior analysis, I had missed this move. It refutes 10...♞xd5 and calls for Sax's 10...♞d7.

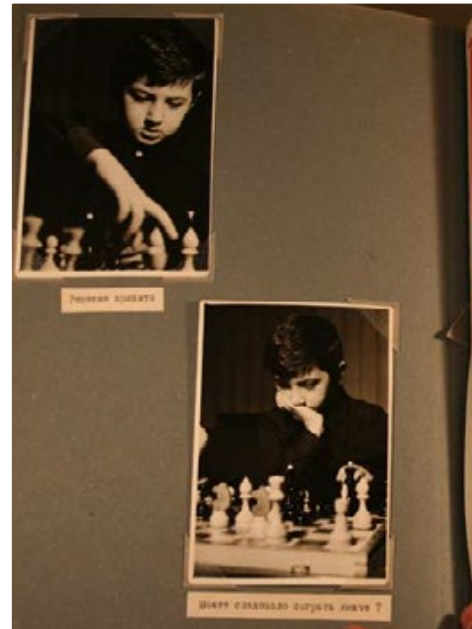
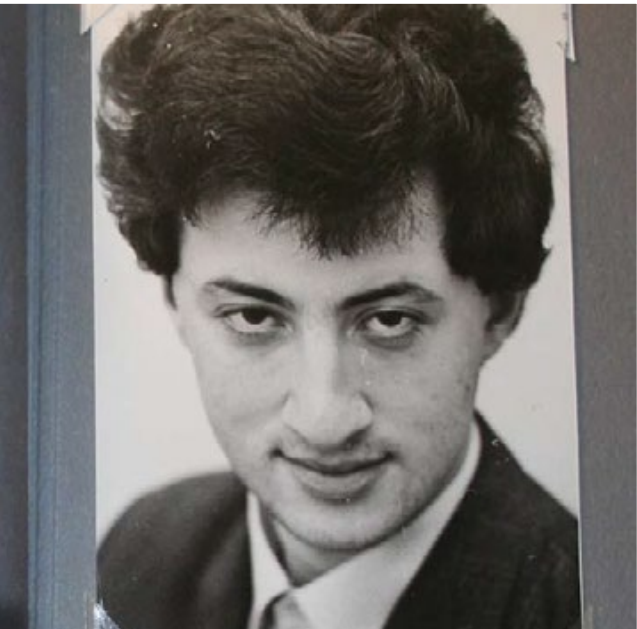
Peter P. Wakker
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Album 61

As Boris Gelfand replies without any hesitation in the interview in this issue, there was no one who had a bigger influence on him than his father. Abram Gelfand was also his staunchest fan. In scrapbooks he religiously collected everything he could lay his hands on to document his son's career. Sixty albums he filled with newspaper clippings, photos, documents, game scores and anything else he thought worth keeping. These albums and the match that Boris Gelfand played for the World Championship last year in Moscow inspired Israeli director Halil Efrat. He went searching for an answer to the question: 'Can any of our children, with a little bit of good Soviet education, become a genius?' His documentary *Album 61* (see poster above) premiered at the Jerusalem Film Festival and will be shown at other film festivals in the months to come.

אלבום 61





Whereas Boris Gelfand deservedly claimed one of his biggest successes ever on the eve of his 45th birthday, the rest of the old guard at the Tal Memorial failed dramatically. Struggling from day one, Vishy Anand and Vladimir Kramnik sensationally ended up at the bottom of the table, suffering no fewer than six defeats between them. With the same score that was enough for a win in the past two years, Magnus Carlsen had to settle for second place. The Norwegian criticized his play as ‘too indifferent’, but seemed relatively impervious to the pressure that tough schedules currently put on many top players. The biggest victim of the work overload was Hikaru Nakamura, who proudly led the field after six rounds and then collapsed completely. Still, the youngsters remain on the rise. Fabiano Caruana (20) rose to third place in the world rankings, while Dmitry Andreikin (23) was the best among Russia’s finest.

Battle of generations at Tal Memorial

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam



While the games were played in a quiet air-conditioned room, an enthusiastic and knowledgeable crowd followed the press conferences and the live commentary in a spacious theatre.

W

When Magnus Carlsen finally had to settle for a draw in his last game against Shakhriyar Mamedyarov and it became clear that Boris Gelfand had won the 8th Tal Memorial, there were cheers and high-fives in the press-room. The Israeli grandmaster, who was born in Minsk when the capital of Belarus still belonged to the Soviet Union, is a popular guest in Russia. Last year's World Championship match, his shared first place in the Alekhine Memorial and his down-

to-earth personality have won him great respect and affection. In a world where youth is increasingly overrated and fame is worshipped like a golden calf, an unglamorous but remarkably successful chess professional in his mid-forties who confidently stands up for traditional values has found his loyal fan base. Journalists and spectators in Moscow invariably addressed him as 'Boris Abramovich'. These days, including one's patronymic is slightly less common in Russia than it used to be, and every time they did so it felt as if they were giving him a small hug.

What's more, he didn't steal his victory. As Magnus Carlsen put it: 'I think it was absolutely deserved. He played very solidly, and when he got his chances he took them. His general understanding is extremely high and I could feel that in my own game against him. He was definitely evaluating the positions more deeply than I was.'

Gelfand was never in any real danger and won three games. He kept a cool head when Morozevich put him under pressure with an exchange sacrifice, showed his great understanding of the Najdorf against Caruana and put an end to Nakamura's winning streak in what he called his best game of the tournament.

Carlsen's words were echoed by Gelfand's good friend Vladimir Kramnik: 'In general I have to say that the level was not high here, not great. I think he was the only one who played well. Everyone will agree, colleagues and specialists, that Boris played the best chess.'

When speaking about the level, Kramnik saved the harshest verdict for himself. Everything that could go wrong did go wrong, and at the end of nine torturous rounds the Russian found himself in last place with a dramatic Elo loss of 18.6 points. Over the years he has often been at a loss why

he has trouble playing in Moscow, but this time he readily agreed that he finally paid the price for the exertions of the Candidates' tournament in London. 'Yes, probably. It's always been like that after a world championship match and London was 14 rounds and the tension was not less than in a world championship match. I know from my own experience that the worst part doesn't come immediately afterwards, but a bit later. I guess I hit the low point here. I wouldn't say that I was feeling bad physically, but I guess there is a kind of nervous exhaustion, whatever you may call it. I was making blunders which I cannot even explain. I seemed to calculate variations, play a normal game, and all of a sudden there is a total collapse and I miss the most basic things. As you know, this happens to me once in a while, but here it was happening almost every second game.

'I knew I was not going to do terribly well here, I could feel it, because I am experienced, but I didn't expect it to be so bad. I remember after my match against Leko I couldn't sleep, I was suffering from insomnia. Now I didn't

feel it so badly, but in fact it was quite bad. I was much more drained physically and mentally than I thought. After such an event it would be best for me not to play for three months, a few months of total rest. Now I realize that my main mistake before this tournament was that I was trying to prepare for it. That was my mistake, my feeling of responsibility. This is a good tournament, I want to prepare, but it was absolutely counterproductive.

'There's not much you can do about it. I just have to get out of this hole. I am not too horrified. Of course it's ridiculous to give up so much rating, but I'll get it back once I am in decent form again.'

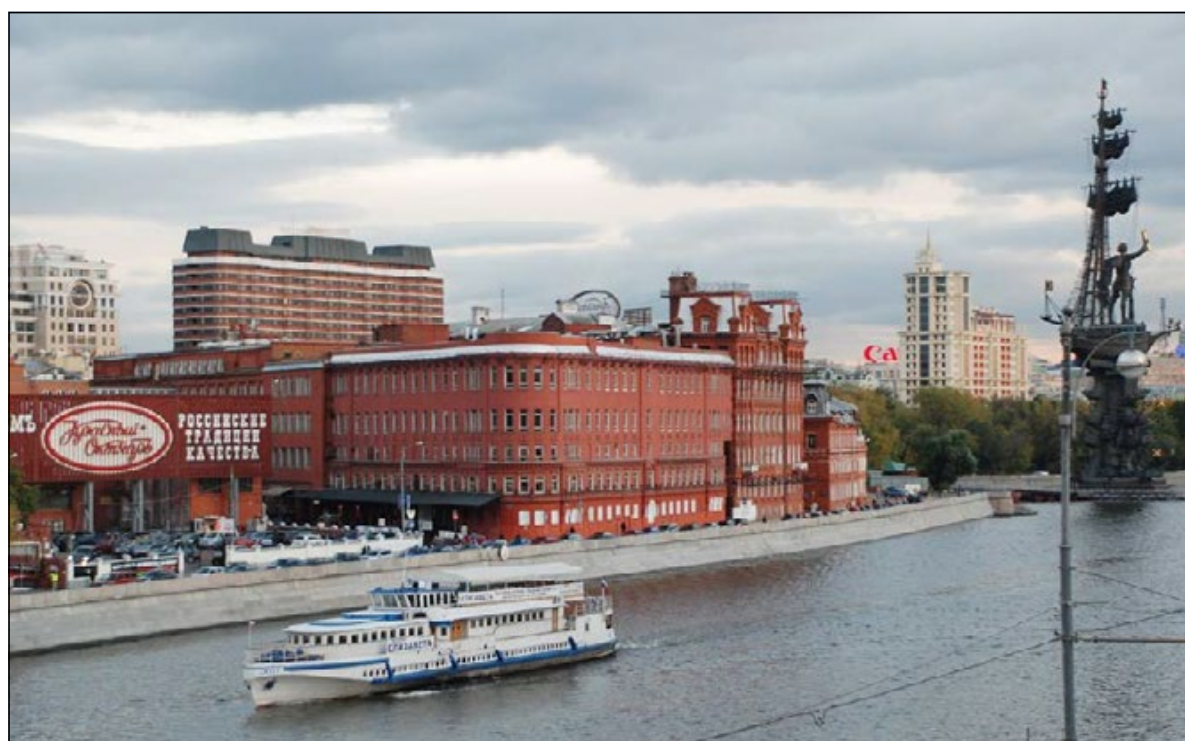
For the eighth edition the Tal Memorial moved from the stately Pashkov House, which had served the event so well in the past years, to the more trendy 'Red October', a former chocolate factory that has been turned into a cultural centre filled with bars, restaurants and lots of ambitious startups. Two years ago, the Botvinnik Memorial was held here, the rapid tournament commemorating Botvin-

Still, four Russian top players collecting a measly two wins from 45 games must be historically unique.

nik's 100th birthday that was won by Anand, ahead of Kramnik, Aronian and Carlsen. Interestingly, the main theatre, where the games were played then, was now used as commentary room. As Ilya Levitov, the head of the management board of the Russian Chess Federation, explained, the idea was twofold: the spectators, who were also invited to ask questions, could play a more active role in the commentary and at the press conferences, while the players were secured of a quiet air-conditioned room inspired by the 'glass cage' that was first used in Sofia. No one could enter this room, but the players could be watched through the glass panes that ensured a quiet playing environment.

Among the residents at Red October was ChessTV, the company that broadcasts the main chess tournaments in Russia on the Internet. In a typical demonstration of modern Russian nationalism, their programmes were exclusively in Russian. The organizers were highly satisfied with the number of online viewers they had and the publicity the Tal Memorial got in the Russian media, but for a non-Russian it felt a bit peculiar that they felt no urge to show one of the most prestigious tournaments on the calendar to a worldwide audience.

With so much focus on the local fans it was a bit painful that the Russian favourites were not in great form.



For the eighth edition the Tal Memorial moved to the trendy 'Red October', a former chocolate factory that has been turned into a cultural centre filled with bars, restaurants and lots of ambitious startups.



Mark Glukhovsky, editor-in-chief of '64', and the interpreter listen as Vishy Anand and Vladimir Kramnik comment on their game. Anand: 'It's funny how quickly your thoughts move to the next one, especially if it's the big one.'

Kramnik's ordeal started as early as Round 1, when he suffered a painful defeat against Carlsen from a position that was not overly exciting. The next day his misery was complete when he also lost against Nakamura. In the meantime, his three countrymen provided little compensation. Much to everyone's amazement there was not a single Russian win in the first six rounds. When that first Russian win came, it was another blow for Kramnik. In Round 7 he slipped up in a fairly innocuous position against Dmitry Andreikin. The Russian champion won a pawn and calmly converted his material advantage. Known for his solidity, Andreikin drew all his other games to finish in shared third place, a result that he was understandably happy with.

Alexander Morozevich had to wait for his first win till the last round, when he got the better of Nakamura in a messy game. By that time he had already suffered three losses and had no reason to be happy about his result. Russia's number two, Sergey Karjakin, finished without a single win. Which doesn't mean that he didn't try. Against Caruana he even tried for 138 moves, but to no avail. As the winner of Norway Chess and a strong rapid event in Kiev shortly afterwards, Kar-

jakin seemed to be one of the favourites. Looking back he realized that he was one of the players who had come to realize that the abundance of top events these days also has a downside and opted for a philosophical evaluation. 'I wanted to show a better result, but I cannot play well in every tournament. I think I am tired, I simply played too many tournaments. I played the Russian League, then the Zug Grand Prix, then Norway, Kiev, the Tal Memorial. It's tough to keep your concentration in every tournament. But if you look at Kramnik, you will understand that I didn't do that badly.'

Still, four Russian top players collecting a measly two wins from 45 games must be historically unique.

Just like Kramnik, World Champion Vishy Anand also had an unnerving start, losing to Caruana on the very first day. Anand fought back with a fine win against Morozevich in Round 3, but that was the last of the good news. The bleakest moment came in Round 5, in the last game between him and his challenger Magnus Carlsen before the World Championship match in Chennai in November. Last October in Bilbao, Carlsen demolished Anand in 30 moves. This time it was all over after 27.

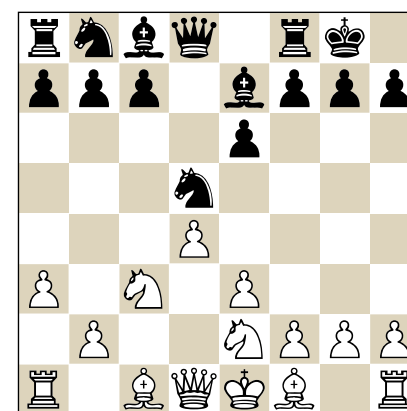
NI 10.8 – E46

Magnus Carlsen

Vishy Anand

Moscow 2013 (5)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♘e2 d5 6.a3 ♙e7 7.cxd5 ♘xd5

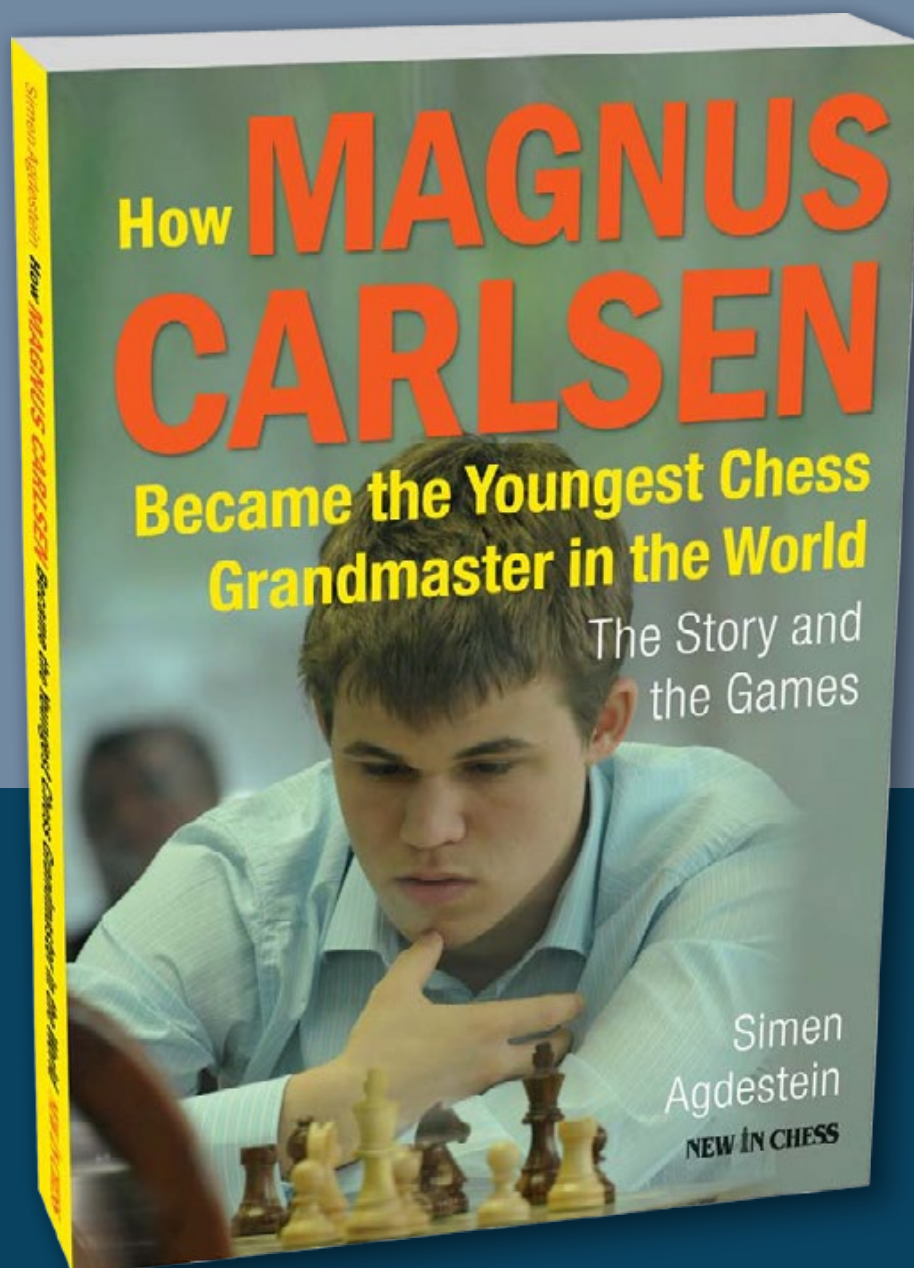


8.♙d2 Chosen because he wanted to play something Anand hadn't faced in a long time. **8...♘d7** At the Olympiad in Calvia in 2004, Anand took on c3 against Aronian (½-½, 39). **9.g3 b6 10.♘xd5 exd5 11.♙g2 ♙b7 12.♙b4 ♘f6 13.0-0 ♖e8** The more active alternative was 13...c5 14.dxc5 bxc5 15.♙c3, when Carlsen believed White was slightly better, as Black's hanging pawns are more likely to be weak than dynamic. **14.♖c1 c6 15.♙xe7 ♖xe7 16.♖e1 ♙d6** Carlsen had expected 16...♘e4 17.♘f4 ♘d6, when the knight is well-positioned to

“Even now, when he is number one in the world, I sometimes say: ‘He’s got potential’.”

- Simen Agdestein

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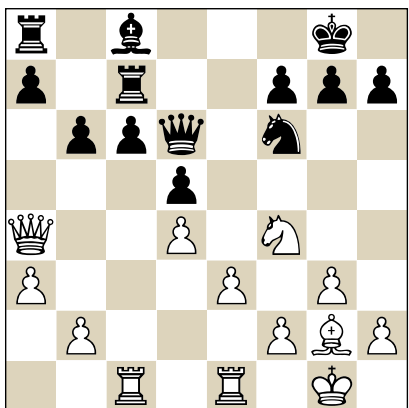
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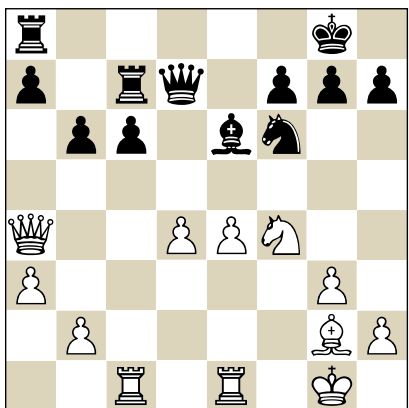
“Agdestein does a good job indicating how various moves and ideas show Carlsen’s growth as a player.”

Taylor Kingston, ChessCafe

stop the white queenside pawns from advancing. **17. ♖f4 ♗c8?** This attempt to take the bishop to f5 fails. **18. ♖a4 ♖c7** After 18... ♗d7 19. ♖b4 the exchange of queens is uncomfortable for Black.



19. f3! A strong change of plan. The concrete threat is e4 and e5. **19... ♗e6 20. e4 dxe4 21. fxe4 ♖d7**



22. d5! Carlsen plays the remainder of the game with great force. **22... cxd5 23. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 24. ♗xe6 fxe6 25. ♗h3!** Probably the move Anand had missed. As Carlsen put it: 'It's pretty much gone.' **25... ♗h8 26. e5 ♗g8 27. ♗xe6 ♖dd8 28. ♖c7 d4 29. ♗d7** Black resigned.

And just like Kramnik, Anand also lost his next game, as White against Nakamura. Looking back, the World Champion failed to see anything positive in his performance in Moscow. His only consolation was that he could now fully focus on the match. 'I was obviously quite disappointed a couple of days back, but now I've come to terms with it. I don't really have an explanation. Maybe it was one tournament too many. There are some prob-

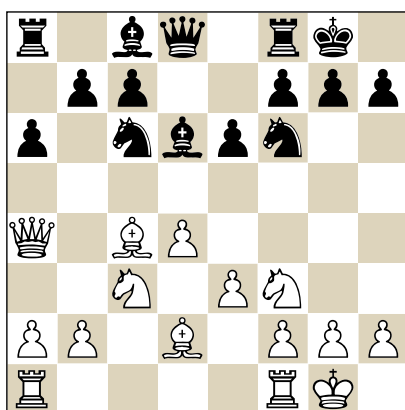
lems that keep cropping up again and again and again. Every once in a while I have this kind of mini-collapse and that's something I'll have to deal with. Well, at least it's clear what will be on my mind now for the next few months.

'I definitely feel the match is something to look forward to. And it's happening in Chennai. They were discussing possible venues and some of them are near the school where I studied and things like that. It's the first time I'll be playing at home, the first time with someone from a different generation. It's funny how quickly your thoughts move to the next one, especially if it's the big one.'

The third player who lost in the first round reacted in a completely different manner to his defeat, even though the loss he suffered was of the kind that might have shattered his self-confidence.

NI 27.4 – D38
Hikaru Nakamura
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Moscow 2013 (1)

1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♗f3 d5 4. ♗c3 ♗b4 5. ♖a4+ ♗c6 6. e3 0-0 7. ♗d2 dxc4 8. ♗xc4 a6 9. 0-0 ♗d6

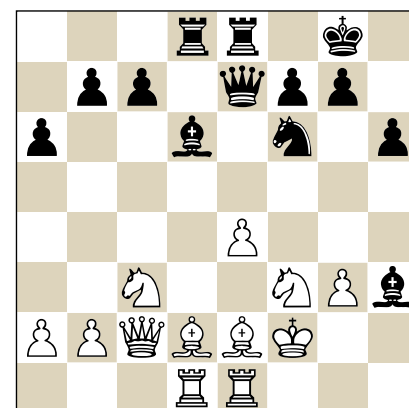


10. ♗ad1 Condemned by both players. White should have gone 10. ♗e2 or 10. ♖c2. **10... e5 11. dxe5** Mamedyarov believed that 11. d5 was better, as the pawn exchange gives Black very easy play. **11... ♗xe5 12. ♗e2 ♖e7 13. ♗g5 ♗f5 14. e4 ♗d7 15. ♖c2 h6 16. ♗f3 ♖fe8 17. ♖fe1 ♖ad8 18. g3 ♗eg4 19. h3** White's position



Shakhriyar Mamedyarov didn't need a second invitation to punish Hikaru Nakamura's feeble opening play.

already smelled, and this is asking for it if you play the 2013 Rapid World Champion. **19... ♗xf2 20. ♖xf2 ♗xh3**



21. ♗g1 Another line to underpin White's bankruptcy: 21. ♗d4 ♗c5 22. ♗e3 ♖e5 23. ♖d3 ♖xd4 24. ♗xd4 ♖d8 and game over. The text-move

brings little relief: **21...♗xg3 22. ♖f1 ♗xe1 23. ♖xe1 ♗g4 24. ♗g2 ♗xf3 25. ♗xf3 ♖d6 26. ♖e2 ♗g3+ 27. ♗g2 ♗g4 28. ♗d1 ♖e6 29. ♗e3 ♖c6 30. ♖b1 ♗h2+ 31. ♗f1 ♗f4+** White resigned.

Perhaps it was his win in the blitz tournament that served as the drawing of lots that convinced Nakamura that he should not dwell on this quick loss for too long. In any case, he was quickly back on his feet again and started one of the most awesome winning streaks in his career with four wins in five rounds against Kramnik, Karjakin, Caruana and Anand. Everything seemed to be going his way and then... he fell victim to the same curse that hit Morozevich when he got to plus-3 last year, only to lose three games in a row. Just like Morozevich, Nakamura totally ran out of steam and he too lost three in a row, his remaining three games against Gelfand, Carlsen and Morozevich.

His horrible finish left the American with a bitter aftertaste. He, too, believed that an agenda with so many top events is hard to handle: 'I played a lot of chess recently and I think that now I am starting to get tired. With over 40 games in two and a half months, it's just crazy, four tournaments in a row. In the end I just got tired and my brain stopped working. Both in the game against Boris and today against Alexander, I had very good positions and today I was close to winning at some point. Sometimes it's just too much. Unfortunately I wiped out a very good tournament. Time to do other things in life, rather than chess. Because chess is certainly no fun now.'

Probably the best damage control was exercised by Fabiano Caruana. The Italian was unhappy with his play, called his two losses 'really bad' and pointed at a few games in which he was much worse. But those games he managed to hold. He punished Carlsen for an endgame error, also beat Anand and Morozevich,

and thanks to Kramnik's Elo loss he climbed to third place in the world rankings. With a win in the last round, which never really was on the cards, he would even have reached 2800, a figure that he tries not to think of. 'It either happens or it doesn't.'

For the moment Caruana has other things to think about. For instance, both games that he lost, he lost with white against the Najdorf. Which is remarkable. But even more remarkable is that the last four games he lost were all Najdorfs. With white. On the other hand, there are memories to cherish. You do not often win

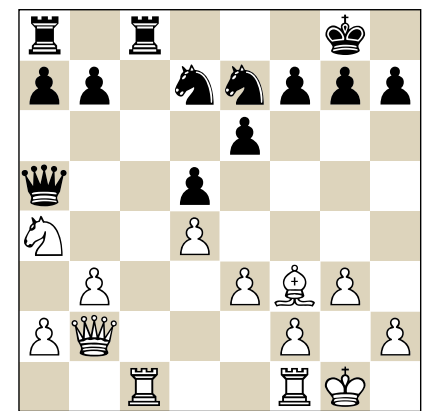
Magnus Carlsen: 'Still there is no reason to beat Kramnik and Anand quite nicely and then play seven poor games.'

against the World Champion and the world number one in the same tournament. 'These were probably my only good games in the tournament. They were nice wins. Neither of them was playing his best on that particular day. Anand surprised me in the opening, which kind of made me nervous. I spent quite a lot of time, but he wasn't playing so well. He seemed a bit complacent and he kind of lost without a fight after I got some advantage. Even when I got an advantage, I wasn't expecting anything from it, but things just went easily.'

'Magnus normally wouldn't lose that endgame. He just made two

unexplainable errors in that game. First he blundered a pawn and later he went into this transformation. I did, in fact, play the endgame well, it was a good game, but normally I'd expect a draw there, against Magnus.'

Carlsen summed up the game as follows: 'First I basically allow him an open shot at the goal by giving away a pawn for absolutely nothing.'



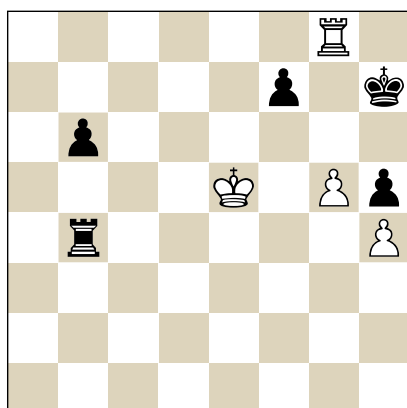
Carlsen-Caruana
position after 16...♗d7

Now after, say, 17. ♗e2, there is not much going on. Instead, White tried to liven things up a bit. **17. ♗c5? ♗xc5 18. dxc5 ♖xc5 19. b4 ♖b5 20. a3 ♖d8** And although White is far from lost, Black simply has an extra pawn.

'Then I thought I was holding it quite well, but it turned out that the endgame is a little trickier than I thought. At some point I thought that I could more or less draw by passively defending, but I was not at all sure about it. I was seeing all kinds of trouble coming up. I couldn't see an absolutely sure way to draw and then I sort of calculated this Rook f8, after which if he returns with the king, I wouldn't end up in zugzwang. So it would be an easy draw. Then I calculated this h-pawn against nothing for a long time and it seemed to me that I was just making a draw in all the lines. So I thought it would be kind of a professional decision to do this and force the draw instead of going for something that might be drawn, but just comes with a lot of suffering. And then it

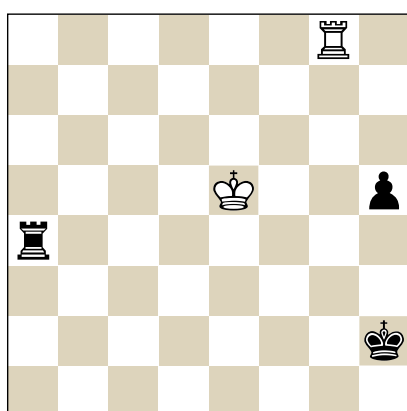
turned out I had missed this plan with ♔h2, which is really easy to see if you have tablebases, but for me it was far from obvious. That was the only move and from then on I started realizing that something was wrong.'

Or, together with the moves:



Carlsen-Caruana
position after 48...♔h7

And now instead of returning with the rook to b8 and going for an almost certain draw that still would require some work, White thought there was a more direct route to the draw: **49.♖f8? ♕xh4 50.♖xf7+ ♔g6 51.♖f6+ ♔xg5 52.♖xb6 ♖a4 53.♖b8 ♔g4 54.♖g8+ ♔f3 55.♖f8+ ♔g3 56.♖g8+ ♔h2**



But this endgame is lost. **57.♔f5 h4 58.♖b8 h3 59.♔g5 ♖e4 60.♔f5 ♖e2 61.♖g8 ♖g2 62.♖d8 ♖f2+** White resigned.

As a reaction to the way Carlsen lost this endgame, Anish Giri tweeted: 'I am pretty sure Magnus is losing the rook endgames because he just sees too much. No sarcasm.' It was also reminiscent of an endgame Carlsen lost in the last Amber tournament

in Monaco against Anand. When instead of going for the draw that several colleagues indicated (and which he had obviously seen), he tried a refinement only to discover that this subtler route was losing. Said Carlsen: 'Maybe. It's about seeing some problems when they probably aren't real. That's happened to me many times. I don't know why I do that. I don't want to show off or anything... Sometimes it's better to be kind of a simpleton. If you see a good move, don't look for a better move.'

Carlsen reached his habitual plus-2 score in the Tal Memorial, which in the past two years was enough to win, but was critical of his play. 'I'm generally fine with someone else winning the tournament, as long as I feel I've done my utmost. This time I think I could have done better. I am not particularly satisfied with my play. It's a little bit like in Stavanger. Too many mistakes, too indifferent. Especially my play with black was at best indifferent. I had four draws in those games and basically in all of them I was either suffering a little bit or a lot and winning chances were zero. I think my preparation was fine, but my work ethic over the board was not

great. At some points I didn't really bother to search for the very best moves. Just play something. Sometimes that works out well, but I was too sloppy this time.'

Nevertheless he beat the two players that he seems to be most eager to beat, Anand and Kramnik. 'Those were my only two good games. Still there is no reason to beat Kramnik and Anand quite nicely and then play seven poor games.'

Neither did he want to hear the excuse that perhaps his mind had already been elsewhere, thinking about the match against Anand. 'Still that's no excuse for not performing your best.'

Then maybe the good thing about this lesser result was that it was some sort of a wake-up call for the match? Not really. 'As far as I know, in the World Championship match there will be only one opponent, and that opponent I dealt with well here. But I think the sort of sloppy play and unnecessary mistakes I will definitely have to make less of in the world championship match. Whether he will exploit it or not is an open question, but there is no reason not to be at my sharpest.'

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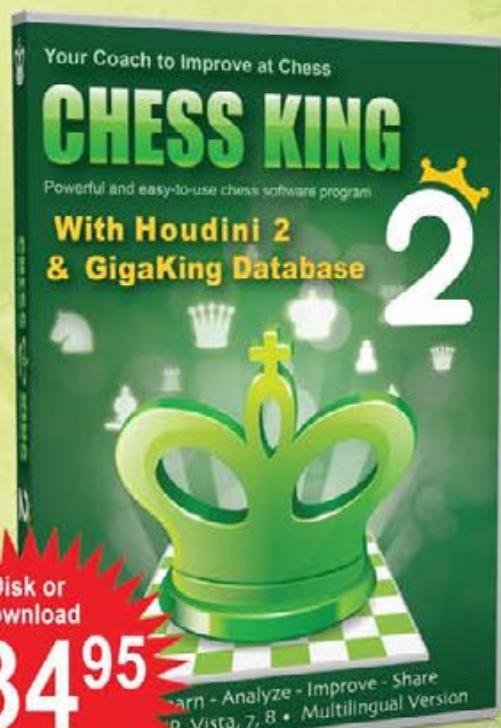


A relieved Sergey Karjakin after nine long rounds. Or was he just happy to see Maria Emelianova (left) and his girlfriend Galiya Kamalova?

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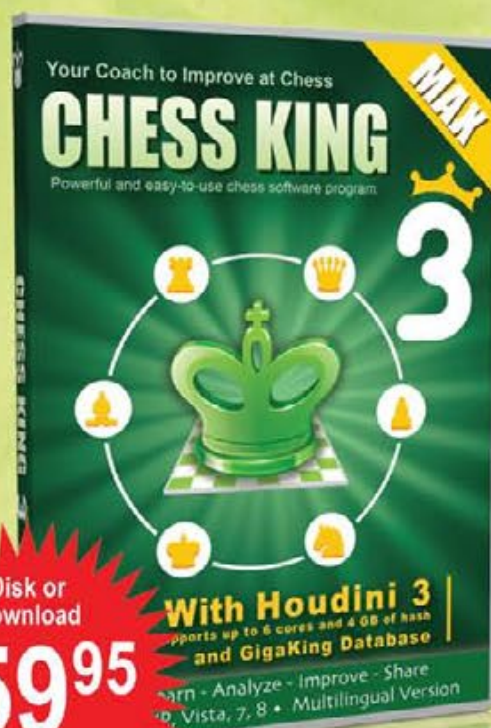
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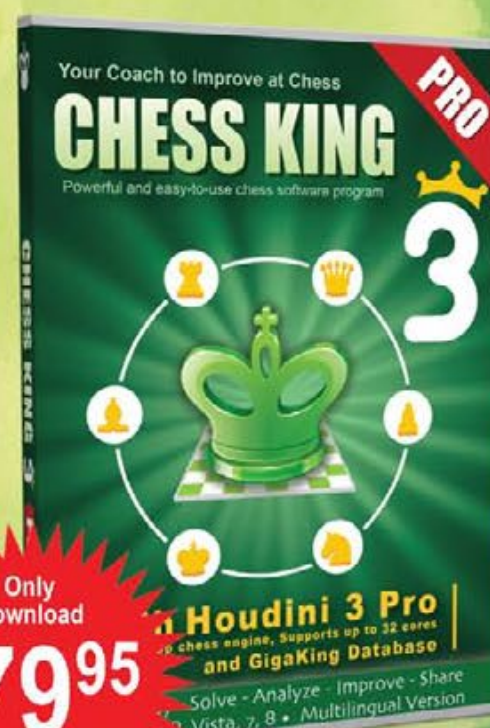
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NOTES BY
Boris Gelfand

SI 38.2 – B33
Hikaru Nakamura
Boris Gelfand
Moscow 2013 (7)

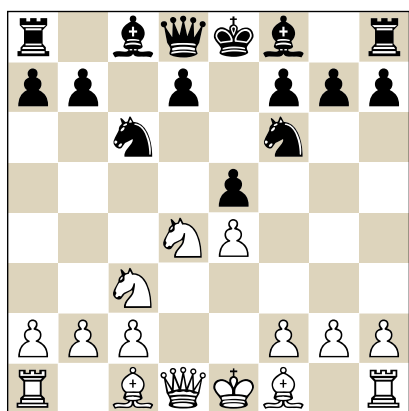
This game was played in Round 7, when Nakamura was leading after an impressive series of wins, while I was half a point behind.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4

Allowing the Sveshnikov! Most of my opponents decided on the Rossolimo system with 3.♙b5.

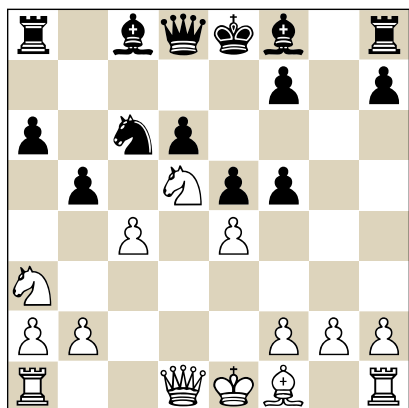
3...cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗f6 5.♗c3 e5

And there it is!



6.♗db5 d6 7.♙g5 a6 8.♗a3 b5 9.♙xf6 gxf6 10.♗d5 f5 11.c4

A small surprise. There had been only one game with this move at the highest level.

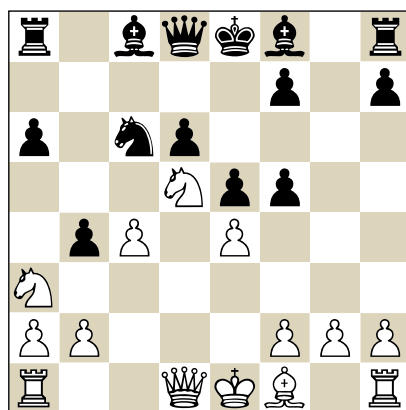


11...b4

After a long think I decided to stick to the spirit of the line.

When he was confronted with 11.c4,

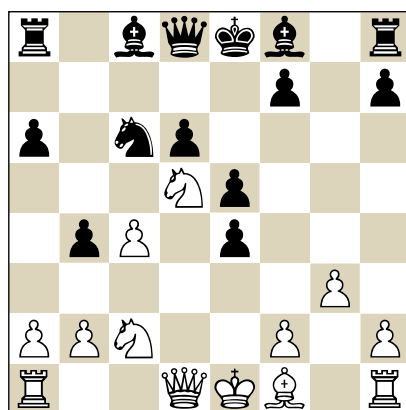
Pavel Eljanov reacted in a different way, but also got a good game: 11...♙a5+ 12.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 13.♙xd2 ♙h6+ 14.♙d1 0-0 15.exf5 ♙xf5 16.cxb5 axb5 17.♙xb5 ♗d4 18.♗e7+ ♙g7 19.♗xf5+ ♗xf5 20.♙d3 ♗e7 21.♗b5 d5 22.♙e2 e4 23.♙c2 ♖ab8 24.a4 f5, and Black was fine, although in the end he lost, in Volokitin-Eljanov, Kiev 2012.



12.♗c2

The attempt to win the exchange is too naive: 12.♙a4 ♙d7 13.♗b5 axb5 14.♙xa8 ♙xa8 15.♗c7+ ♙d8 16.♗xa8, when Black gets an impressive pawn centre and the better game: 16...♗d4 17.♖d1 fxe4 18.cxb5 d5.

12...fxe4 13.g3



13...♙g7

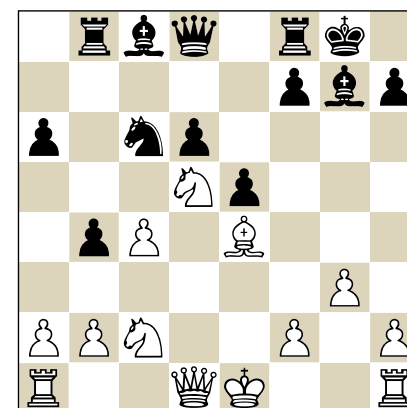
The engines recommend 13...h5 14.♙g2 f5 (after 14...♙g4 15.f3 exf3 16.♙xf3 White has compensation for the pawn) 15.f3, with a complicated game.

14.♙g2 0-0 15.♙xe4

Other continuations, such as 15.♗cxb4 ♗d4 16.♙xe4 ♙h3 17.♙h5 f5 or 15.♗dxb4 ♙a5 16.♙xd6 ♗xb4 17.♙xb4 ♙xb4+ 18.♗xb4 ♖b8 19.a3

a5 20.♗d5 ♖xb2, are not dangerous for Black.

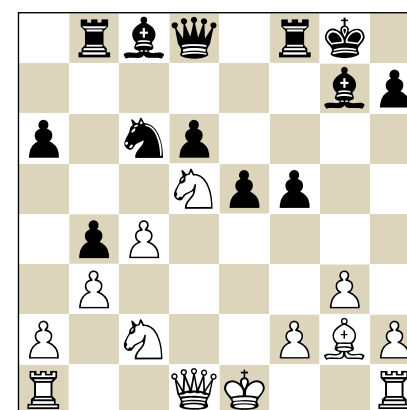
15...♖b8



16.b3

Black gets the initiative after 16.g4 ♙h4!? (or 16...b3 17.axb3 ♖xb3) and good counterplay in case of 16.♗de3 ♗e7 17.g4 b3 or 16.0-0 f5 17.♙g2 b3.

16...f5 17.♙g2



17...e4

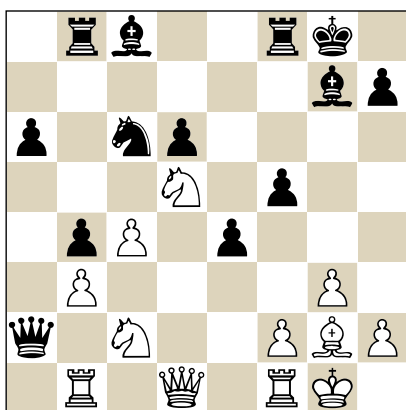
Here I had to make a decision, and after a long thought I decided on the risky-looking pawn grab on a2, as I couldn't find anything to refute the idea. The point is that once the a2-pawn has been taken, Black will not have problems in almost any end-game as he has counterplay connected with ...a5-a4.

Alternatively, 17...♙h8 18.0-0 ♙e6 19.♙e2 a5 20.♖ad1 ♙d7 21.♖d2 would lead to a normal game, typical for this opening.

18.♖b1 ♙a5!?

The trivial 18...♗e7 19.0-0 ♗xd5 20.♙xd5+ ♙h8 21.♖bd1 ♙e5 22.♙d2 ♙b6, with counterplay, was also possible.

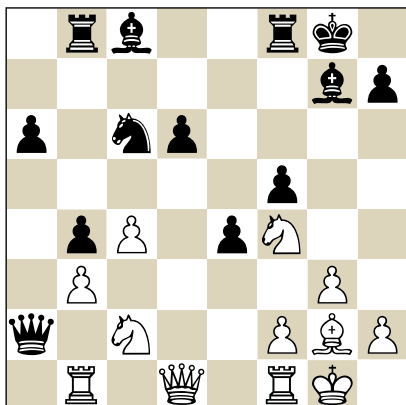
19.0-0 ♙xa2



20. d3

The most natural move.

I also considered 20. f4!?, when Black has to ignore the d6-pawn and develop the light-squared bishop by ... d7 or ... b7:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

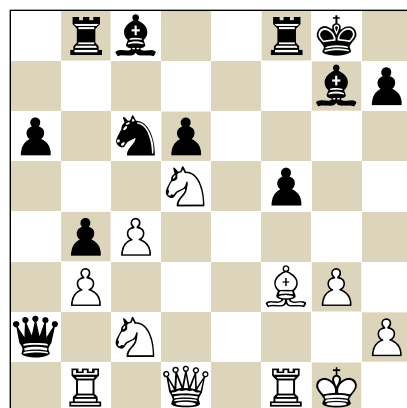
A) 20... b7!? 21. f3 e3!? 22. e1 b8 23. e2 (23. d3 e3 favours Black) 23... a5 24. d5 e7!? (or the stylish 24... f4!? 25. d4 f4 h8 26. d5 c5 27. f4 c8 28. f3 f5 29. g2 g6, and the bishop pair is good compensation for the pawn) 25. dxe7+ fxe7 26. d6 d8! 27. d1 d6 28. d6 f4, with counterplay;

B) 20... d7!? 21. f3 (21. d6

e8 22. d5+ f7 gives Black counterplay) 21... a5! 22. fxe4 a4 23. d6 axb3 24. e3 b8, and Black has good counterchances;

C) After 20... e5 21. f3 exf3 22. fxf3 a5 23. f2 White gets attacking chances.

The most energetic option was 20. f3!, trying to open the game while the opponent's queen is far from the action: 20... exf3 (not so precise is 20... d7 21. fxe4! fxe4 22. f4, when White grabs the e4-pawn and has a dangerous attack) 21. fxf3, and now it is better to leave the queen on a2 where it is safe while disturbing the opponent's pieces:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

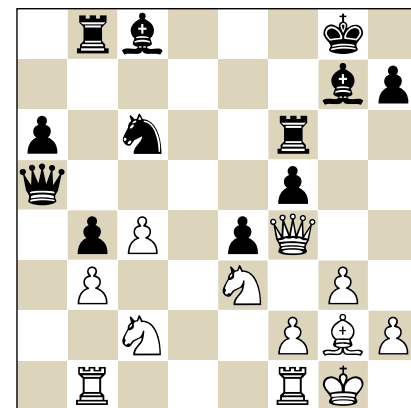
21... d7!? 22. cxb4 bxb4 23. b4 b4 24. d6 b3 25. b3 b3 26. d7, with a draw as the most likely outcome.

20... a5 21. d6 f6

The most natural reply, but also interesting was 21... b7!? (so that the bishop on g7 controls the long diagonal) 22. b8 d1 e5, with a fairly balanced position.

22. f4

I'd rather expected 22. d2 c5 23. d5 f7 24. g5, with a complicated game where both sides have their chances, but maybe even simpler is 22... e6 23. f1 d8 24. e2 f8, and Black shouldn't worry too much.

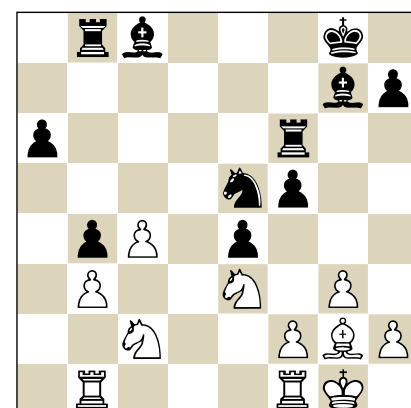


22... e5 A natural response.

After 22... c5 23. b8 d1, Black's position could be dangerous: 23... e6 24. d5! f8 25. d6!.

23. dxe5 Black should hardly have any problem after the queen exchange. After 23. d5 f7 24. e3 a5!? 25. f1 e6 the position is unclear.

23... dxe5



24. d5?!

A step in the wrong direction.

Susan Polgar Chess Daily News

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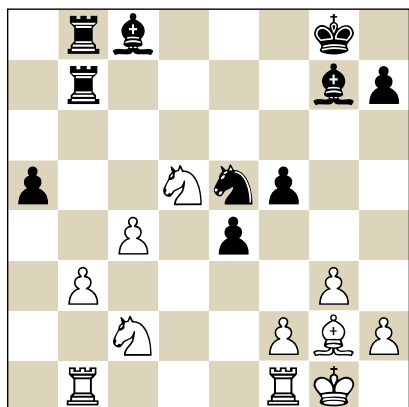
Boris Gelfand is not only a leading expert in the Najdorf. Against Hikaru Nakamura he demonstrated that the Sveshnikov holds no secrets for him either.

Better was 24. Rfd1! ? Rf7 (intending ...f4) 25. Ra1 f4!? 26. gxf4 Nf3+ 27. Qxf3 exf3 (after 27... Qxa1 28. Qxe4 Rg7+ 29. Qf1 Qc3 White has excellent compensation for the exchange), and due to the bishop pair Black's chances are not worse.

Black is also OK after 24. f3 exf3 25. Qxf3 Nxf3+ 26. Rxf3 Rf7 .

24... Rf7 25. Ncxb4 a5! 26. Nc2 Rfb7

White has wasted two moves to capture the b4-pawn and given Black strong pressure along the b-file.

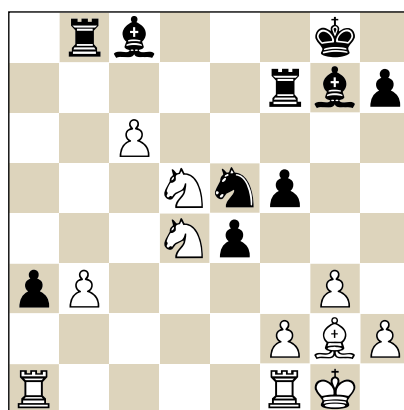


27. Nce3 ?

Now Black seizes the initiative.

Black has hardly more than move repetition after 27. Rbd1! Nd3 (27... Rxb3 also leads to equality after 28. Ne7+ Qf8 29. Nxc8 Rxc8 30. Nd4 a4 31. Nxf5) 28. Nce3 Rf7 29. Rb1 Rfb7 .

I had expected 27. Nd4 and was hesitating between simplifications leading to a draw (27... Nxc4 28. Nc6 Nd2 29. Nde7+ Qf7 30. Nxb8 Rxb8 31. Nxc8 Nxb1 32. Nd6+ Qe6 33. Nxf5 Qxf5 34. Rxb1 Qc3 , with a draw) or big complications after 27...a4 28. c5! a3 29. c6! Rf7 30. Ra1 . I had a feeling that Black should be fine here, but the lines are very complicated. Here are a few sample lines discovered with considerable help of the computer:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

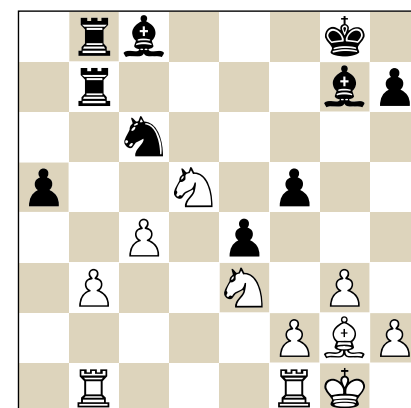
A) 30... Nd3! 31. c7! Rb7! 32. Nxf5 (the only move) 32... Qxf5 (32... Qxa1 33. Nh6+ Qf8 34. Nxf7 Qd4 35. Nd6! ? Qxf2+! 36. Qh1 e3 37. Qf3 – 37. Nxe3 Rxc7 38. Nb5 should also be sufficient – 37... Rxc7! 38. Nxc7 Ne1! 39. Nd5 a2 40. Nxe3 a1 Q 41. Rxf2 Nxf3+ 42. Qg2 Qe6 43. Rxf3+ Qg8 44. Ndf5

and White plays g4, and it's a draw) 33. Rxa3 Rxc7 34. Nxc7 Rxc7 35. Ra4 Re7 , and Black is slightly better;

B) 30... Nf3+ 31. Nxf3 Qxa1 32. Rxa1 exf3 33. Qf1! (33. Qxf3 Ra7 34. b4 Qg7 , with a black edge) 33... Ra7 (33... Qe6 34. Qc4) 34. Qc4 Qf8 35. c7 Rbb7 36. Qf1 , with equality.

27... Nc6

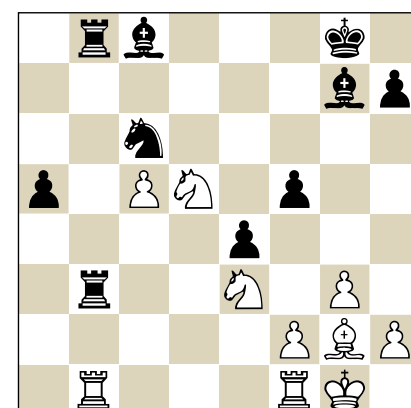
I liked this move, which consolidates my position, but even stronger was the immediate 27...a4 28. b4 Qe6! 29. Rbd1 (only this; after 29. c5 a3 Black has a clear advantage) 29...a3 30. Qh3 Rf8! , and White is in real trouble.



28. c5 I had considered 28. Qh3 a4 29. Qxf5 Qxf5 30. Nxf5 Rxb3 31. Rxb3 Rxb3 32. Nxc7 Qxc7 , and Black is slightly better.

Both of us had missed that after the knight had left e5, White could have wrecked Black's centre with 28. g4! fxc4 (28...a4 29. Nxf5 Qxf5 30. gxf5 Qe5 31. Qxe4 a3 32. b4 a2 33. Ra1 is also equal) 29. Qxe4 Rxb3 30. Rxb3 Rxb3 31. c5, and now that White's bishop has got into the game, chances are equal.

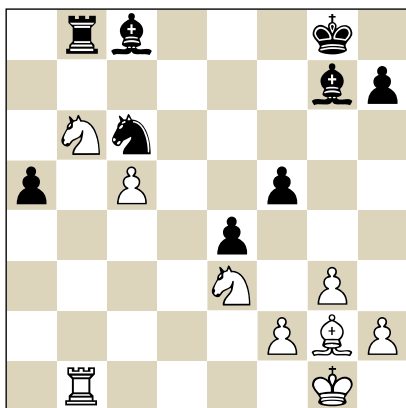
28... Rxb3



29. Nb6 ?

There was still time to return to the correct idea: 29. ♖xb3 ♖xb3 30.g4! ♕a6 31. ♖e1 fxg4 32. ♕xe4, with chances for both sides.

29... ♖xb1 30. ♖xb1



30... ♕e6

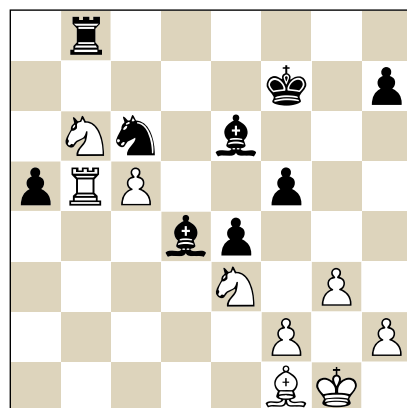
More precise was 30... ♕d4 31. ♖c1 (31. ♖b5? is a blunder because of 31... ♕a6) 31... ♕e6, with a clear black advantage, but it is hard to see that White's rook is better placed on b5 than on c1. The difference is that the a5-pawn would be under attack.

31. ♕f1 ♕d4

I rejected 31... a4 32. ♕b5 a3 33. ♕xc6 a2 34. ♖f1 a1 ♖ 35. ♖xa1 ♕xa1 36. ♕d5 ♖f7 37. ♖xf5 ♕xd5 38. ♖xd5, and White should be able to hold.

32. ♖b5 ♖f7

32... ♕xe3 33.fxe3 ♖d8 34.g4 fxg4 35. ♕g2 would make White's task easier and who would voluntarily exchange such a bishop?



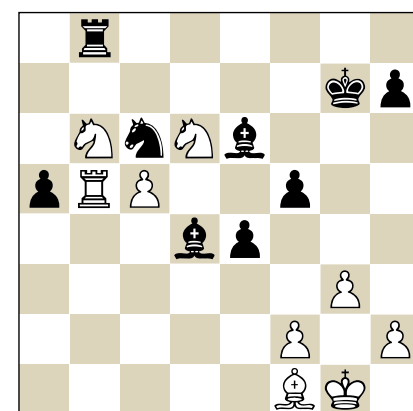
33. ♖ec4 When first faced by this move I panicked, but at closer inspection it turns out to be a waste of time.

For some reason, after 33. ♖g2! it is hard for Black to achieve anything substantial, for instance: 33... ♖d8 34. ♖bc4 a4 35. ♖b6 ♕d7 36. ♖d5 ♕xc5 37. ♖a6, and the activity of White's pieces should be enough for a draw.

33... ♖g7! 34. ♖d6

Alternatively, 34. ♖xa5 ♖a7 leads to big material losses.

And after 34. ♖e3 Black again should dare to exchange his powerful bishop, but with an extra tempo: 34... ♕xe3 35. fxe3 ♖d8, and Black is clearly better.



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QP 7.9 – A45

Magnus Carlsen

Vladimir Kramnik

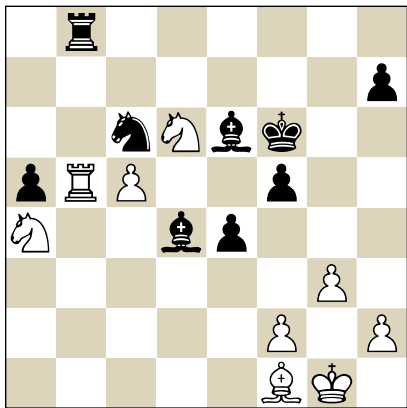
Moscow 2013 (1)

34...♔f6 Natural and strong.

After 34...♔xc5 35.♖xc5 ♖xb6 36. ♔c4 ♔f6 37.g4! a4 38.gxf5 ♔xc4 39.♗xe4+ ♔g7 40.♖xc4 a3 41.♗c3 ♖a6 42.♗a2 White has good drawing chances.

The computer also indicates 34... ♔e5!? 35.♗dc4 (35.♗bc4 loses to 35... ♔xd6 36.♗xd6 a4) 35...♔c3, with a sizeable advantage for Black.

35.♗a4 Better was 35.♔g2, when Black continues 35...♔c3.

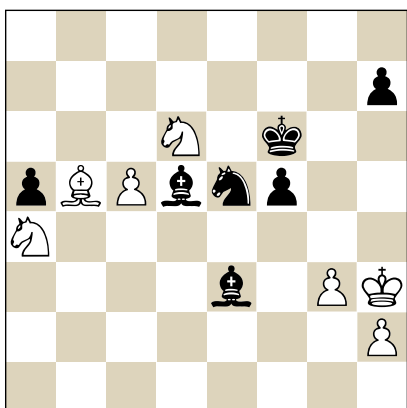


35...e3! Suddenly a mating attack is started with only limited material remaining on the board.

36.fxe3 ♔xe3+ 37.♔g2

37.♔h1 loses to 37...♔d5+ 38.♔g2 ♖xb5 39.♗xb5 ♔e5.

37...♔d5+ 38.♔h3 ♖xb5 39. ♔xb5 ♗e5

**40.♗c3**

40.♗b6 would have required some technique from Black:

A) 40...♔e6 41.♗e8+ ♔g5 42. ♗c7 ♔b3 43.♗a4 f4 44.gxf4+ ♔xf4 45.♔g2 ♔d4, and Black is close to victory, but due to the limited material, some difficulties remain.

B) 40...♔f3! (keeping the king in the cage) 41.♗dc4 ♗xc4 42.♔xc4

(42.♗xc4 loses to 42...♔e2) 42...♔g5 43.♗d7 (or 43.♗a4 ♔c6 44.♔b3 ♔f6, winning) 43...a4 44.♗e5 ♔g4+! 45. ♗xg4 fxg4+ 46.♔g2 ♔xc5, and this leads to victory, as White's king has to protect the weak pawns and cannot run to the queenside.

40...♔f3! 41.♔e2

After 41.♗c4 ♔xc5 wins.

41...♔xe2 42.♗d5+

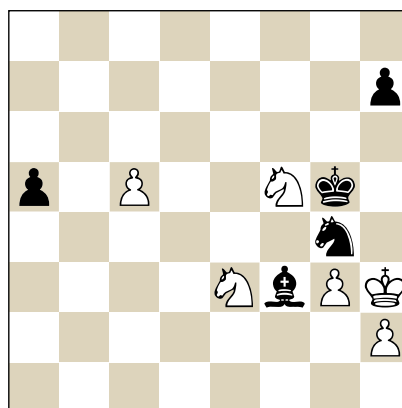
Or 42.♗xe2 ♔xc5, and wins.

42...♔g5 43.♗xe3 ♗g4!

Black had a nice alternative in 43... ♔f3!, intending ...♗g4, and wins.

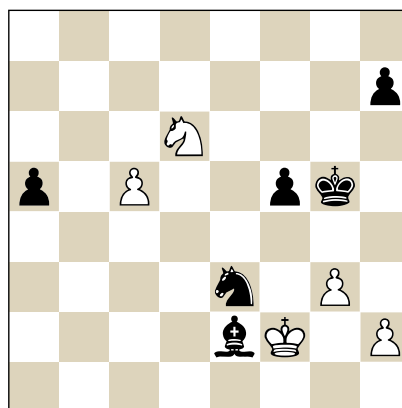
44.♔g2

Note that 44.♗dxf5 runs into 44...♔f3



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

An amazing position! A mating attack with just a few pieces on the board.

44...♗xe3+ 45.♔f2**45...♗c4**

The computer also indicates 45...a4 46.♔xe3 a3 47.♔xe2 a2 48.c6 a1 ♖ 49.c7 ♖a6+. But what could be simpler than a won pawn ending?

White resigned in view of 46.♔xe2 ♗xd6 47.cxd6 ♔f6 48.♔d3 ♔e6 49.♔c4 ♔xd6 50.♔b5 ♔d5 51.♔xa5 ♔e4 52.♔b5 ♔f3 53.♔c5 ♔g2 54.♔d4 ♔xh2 55.♔e5 ♔xg3 56.♔xf5 h5.

1.d4 ♗f6 2.♔g5

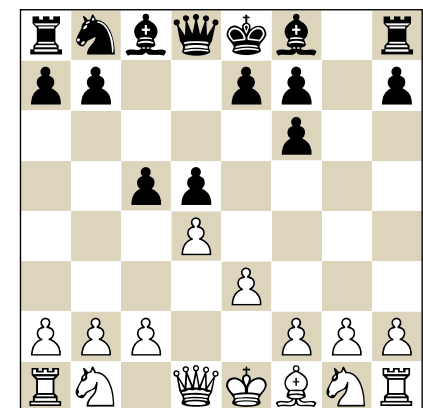
It's no secret that I have not been very successful in the opening in previous encounters with Kramnik. Usually, my main concern has been how to equalize, even with white. This is my latest attempt.

2...d5 3.e3

3.♔xf6 gxf6 (3...exf6 is strategically kind of playable for White) is not too common, but definitely very interesting: 4.c4 e5! 5.dxe5 d4, and Black has an excellent version of the Albin.

3...c5

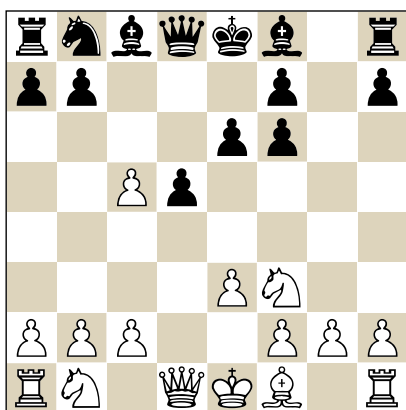
Even in off-beat lines Kramnik knows what to do. This is surely the best way of handling the Trompowsky.

4.♔xf6 gxf6**5.dxc5**

5.♗f3 was an interesting try, when 5... ♗c6 6.c4 cxd4 7.♗xd4 ♗xd4 8.exd4 dxc4 9.♔xc4 ♔g7 would bring the game along the lines of the famous game Borislav Ivanov-Kiril Georgiev, won brilliantly by White.

5...cxd4, however, would spoil most of the fun: 6.exd4 (6.♗xd4 e5 7. ♔b5+ ♔d7 8.♔xd7+ ♖xd7 is also far from equal) 6...♔g4! (6...♗c6 7. c4) 7.c4 ♔xf3 8.♖xf3 ♗c6 9.cxd5 ♗xd4 10.♖e4 ♖b6, and surprisingly, White is already busted (check for yourselves).

5...e6 6.♗f3



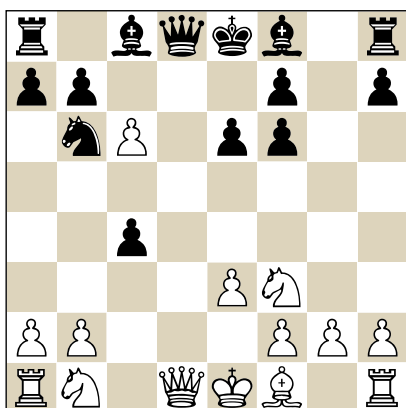
6...d7!? This one came after a few minutes thinking. The idea of putting the knight on c5 and the bishop on its lawful diagonal is very appealing, and one that I had not anticipated in my preparation.

The idea was 6...xc5 7.c4 dxc4 8. b2 (exchanging queens without the bishop pair is definitely no good) 8...c3 9.bxc3, and according to Peter Heine, the comp claimed this was playable for White. Compared to the game Black has an extra tempo and a better pawn structure, but his pieces are on slightly less active squares.

7.c4 dxc4 8.c6

8. xc4 xc5 9. b2 g7 appeared harmonious enough for Black.

8...b6



9. b2

After 9. xd8+ xd8, even if I manage to gobble up the pawn on c4, Black is always going to have a good game, with his active pair of bishops.

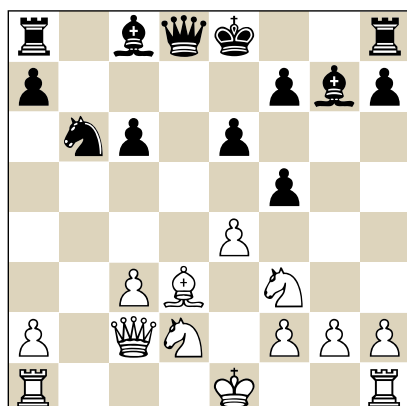
9...c3

9...bxc6 10. c2, and White will take on c4, with the better pawn structure and a slightly better game.

10.bxc3 bxc6 11. c2 g7 12. d3

Trying to provoke his next move, which is probably best anyway.

12...f5 13.e4



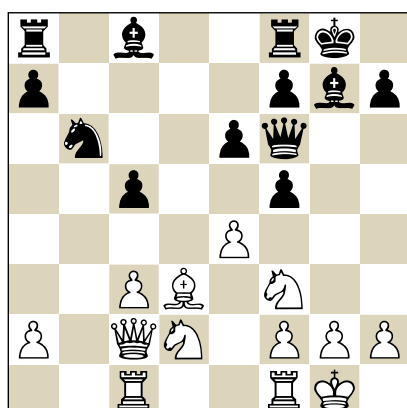
13...f6!

Much better than 13...fxe4 14. xe4, which would repair his structure, but

‘Usually, my main concern has been how to equalize against Kramnik, even with white. This is my latest attempt.’

activate my pieces and potentially give me attacking chances.

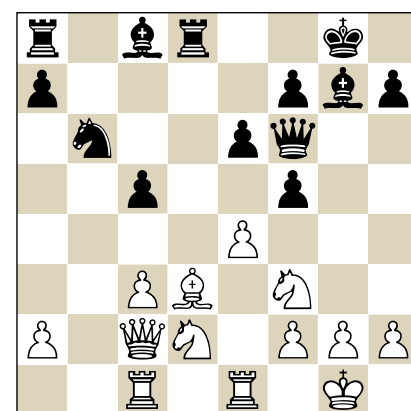
14. c1 0-0 15.0-0 c5



16. fe1

Here 16.a4 was interesting as well. I had not really hit upon this particular idea yet, otherwise I would probably have given it serious consideration: 16...c4 17. xc4 xc4 18. xc4 b7 19. d3 ac8 20.c4 fd8, and it seems to me that Black has an active position and excellent compensation for the pawn, while the comp claims (correctly) that White is a pawn up.

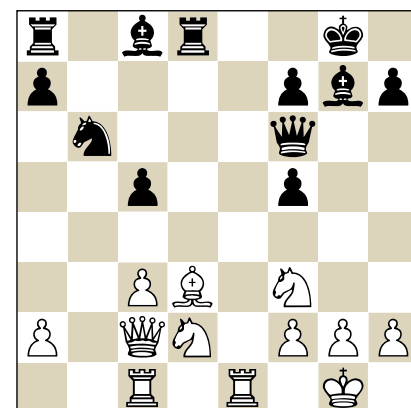
16...d8



17.a4

I was considering all kinds of ways to activate my knights and attack the weak pawn on f5, but I just couldn't make it work. So I decided to attack the only other possible target, the knight on b6.

17.exf5 exf5, and now:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 18. f1 c4 19. e2 f4, and this did not look all that inspiring. True, Black has some weaknesses, but he also has active pieces and a lot of space;

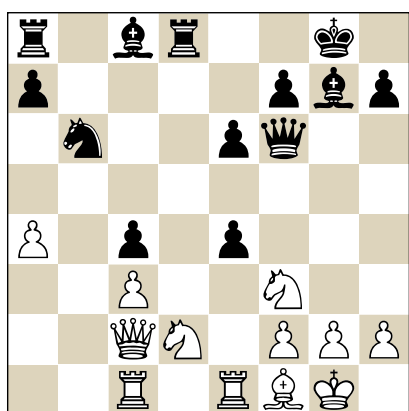
B) 18. c4 e6 19. e3 (19. ce5 c4 20. f1 d5, and Black is taking over) looks good, with the knight going to g3. However, he's in time for 19...h6, and it's not clear what I've achieved.

17...c4

A practical choice. I did not see a refutation of 17...♘xa4, but at least I have a draw in hand: 18.♙xa4 (18.e5 ♙e7 19.♙xf5 exf5 20.♙xa4 a5 is probably much less promising for White than I thought during the game) 18...♖xd3 19.♙c6 ♖b8 20.♙c7 ♖a8 21.♙c6.

18.♙f1 fxe4

Allowing me to attack his queen with tempo, but he really needed the d5-square for the knight.

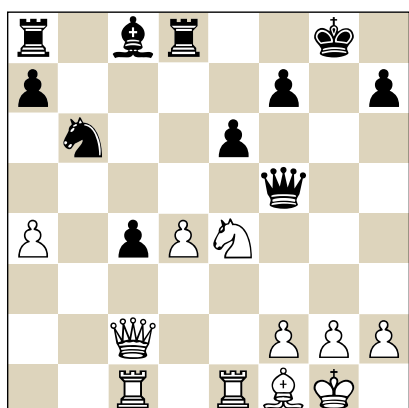


19.♘xe4 ♙f5 Also possible was 19...♙g6 20.a5 ♘d5 21.♙xc4 ♙b7, for instance 22.♘c5 (22.a6 ♙c6 23.♙f1 ♖ac8 is what I intended to do, but Black clearly has very reasonable compensation here) 22...♙xc2 23.♖xc2 ♖dc8 24.a6 ♖xc5 25.axb7 ♖b8, and Black has no problems.

20.♘d4

The only testing move, but not a difficult one to find.

20...♙xd4 21.cxd4



21...♙b7

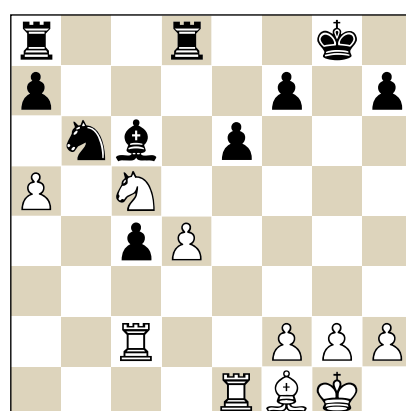
I did not calculate 21...♖xd4 22.♖cd1 very deeply, as it's clear that with the exposed black king White is never in danger. The text is safer and better.

22.♘c5 ♙xc2 23.♖xc2 ♙c6 24.a5

NEW IN CHESS



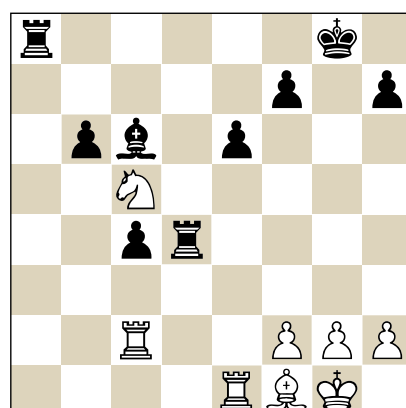
Apart from his wins against Kramnik and Anand, Magnus Carlsen saw little to be pleased about. 'I think my preparation was fine, but my work ethic over the board was not great.'



24...♖xd4!

The key trick, which I had not seen coming a few moves ago. Otherwise White would be a pawn up with excellent winning chances.

25.axb6 axb6

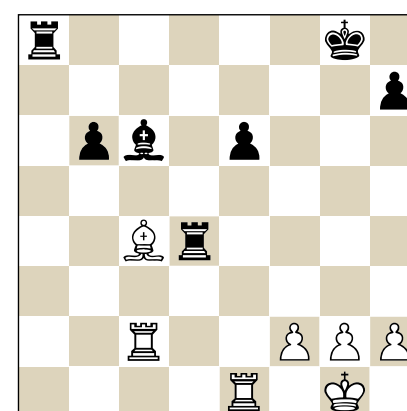


26.♘xe6

After a bit of a think I decided that it was worth playing on a bit, although the position obviously does not offer much.

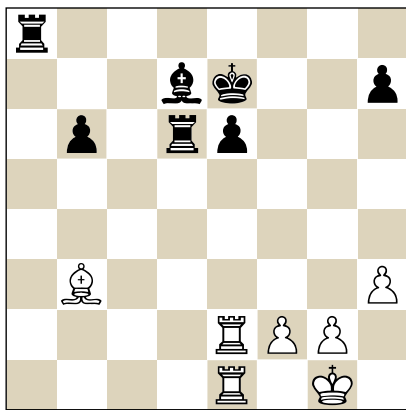
After 26.♘b3 cxb3 27.♖xc6 b2 secures the draw: 28.♖b1 (28.♖xb6 ♖a1 even loses) 28...♖a1 29.♖xb2 ♖dd1 30.g3 ♖xf1+.

26...fxe6 27.♙xc4



27...♙d7 27...♙d5 28.♙xd5 exd5 29.g3 would not be a good practical choice, as the white rooks could at any time get to the 7th rank.

28.h3 ♙f7 29.♙b3 ♙e7 30.♖ce2 ♖d6



31. Rxe4

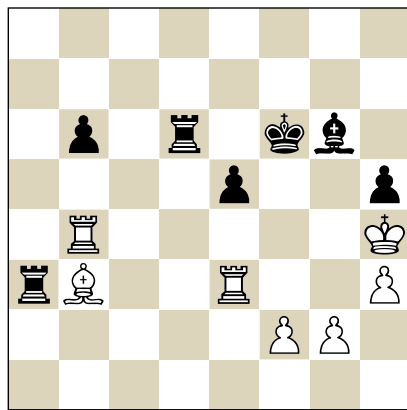
For now, Black is the only one with a passed pawn. Nevertheless, it's easier to play White here, with the more compact pawn structure and active pieces.

31...Rxa3 32. R1e3 h5 33. Rh4 Re8 34. Qh2 Qg6

Logically, he takes the opportunity to activate the bishop a bit.

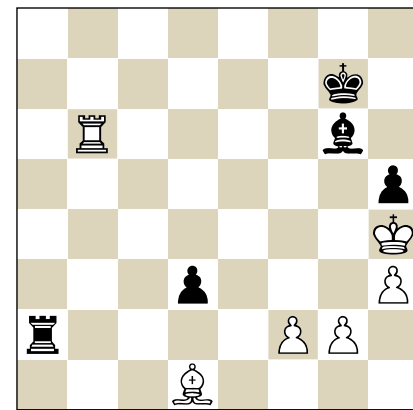
35. Rb4 Qf6 36. Qg3 e5 37. Qh4

Intending g4 and then possibly f4, with an attack.



37...Rd4+?! A slightly panicky move in mutual time-trouble, but not decisive yet. My plan becomes clear after 37...Ra5 38. g4 hxg4 39. hxg4 e4 (39...Qg7 40. Rc4 is still not an easy draw) 40. f4! exf3 41. Rf4+ Qg7 42. Re7+ Qh6 43. Rf8 Qd3 44. Rxf3 (Black draws after 44. g5+ Rxc5 45. Rh8+ Qg6 46. Rg8+ Qh6 47. Rxc5 f2), and even with very little material, Black is struggling with his king.

38. Rxd4 exd4 39. Re6+ Qg7 40. Rxb6 d3 41. Qd1 Ra2!



42. Qg3 Not really the move that I wanted to play, but the only way to keep the game going.

If 42. Qxh5 Qxh5 43. Qxh5 Rxf2 44. g4 Rf6! (if 44...d2 45. Rd6, winning), and the rook gets behind the pawn for a draw.

42. Rb7+ is slightly trickier: 42...Qf6 43. Qxh5 Qxh5 44. Qxh5 Rxf2 45. g4 and there is no ...Rf6. Nevertheless, after 45...Qe6 46. Rb1 (46. Rb8 Rf7!) 46...d2 47. Rd1 Qf7 48. g5 Qg7 it's clearly a draw.

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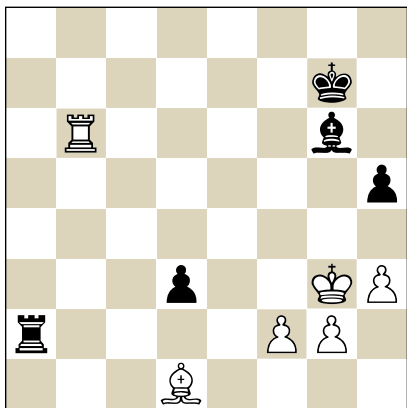
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42. ♖f3 ♜xf2 43. ♔g5 ♖f7 44. ♜b7 d2 also leads nowhere.

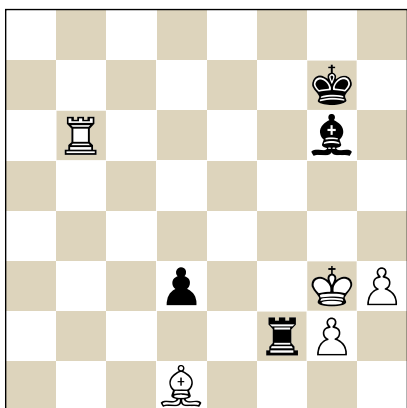


42...h4+?

The decisive mistake.

The way to go was 42... ♜a1 43. ♖f3 ♜a4!, which was what I had expected. Now I have a choice between 44.h4 ♜d4 45. ♖d1 d2, when my pieces are too passive to play for a win, and 44. ♜d6 h4+ 45. ♔h2 ♜f4 (less accurate is 45... ♜a2 46. ♜d4 ♜xf2 47. ♜xh4 d2 48. ♜d4 ♖c2 49. ♖g4!, with ♔g3 to follow, when the d-pawn is lost), when I can certainly still try to bring the king around, but I did not have great hopes of winning.

43. ♔xh4 ♜xf2 44. ♔g3



44...♜f6

After this it's fairly easy.

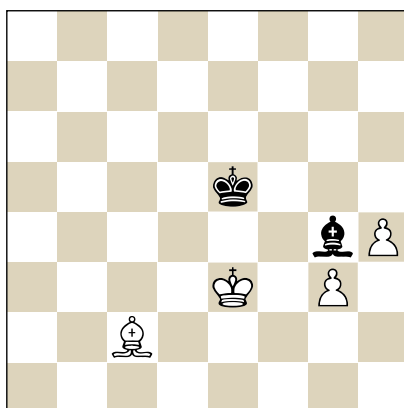
44... ♜f1 would be quite a clever trap, when the way to go is 45. ♖g4!, and White will win, slowly but surely. But not 45. ♖f3? d2 46. ♜d6 ♖e4!, with a draw: 47. ♖g4 ♜g1 48. ♜xd2 ♜xg2+ 49. ♜xg2 ♖xg2 50. ♔xg2; or 47. ♜xd2 ♖xf3 48. gxf3.

45. ♜xf6 ♔xf6 46. ♔f4 d2 47. ♔e3 ♔e5 48. g3 ♖f5 49. h4 ♖e6 50. ♔xd2 ♔e4 51. ♔e2 ♖g4+ 52. ♔e1 ♖e6 53. ♔f2 ♔e5 54. ♔e3

ETERI KUBLASHVILI

♖d7 55. ♖c2 ♖g4

Perhaps Kramnik had hoped that it would be hard to make progress for me with his king active on e5, combined with the ever-present danger of the 'wrong' h-pawn. However, I have a fairly simple way of breaking down this defence.



56. ♖g6 ♖d7

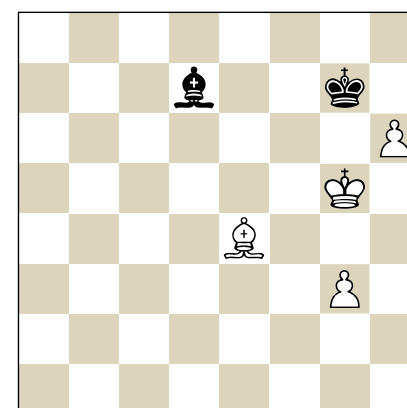
56... ♖d1 would have been slightly more resilient: 57.h5 ♔f6 58. ♔f4 ♖e2 59. ♖e8! (the only way, but not too hard to find) 59... ♔e7 60.h6, and thanks to this little trick the pawn nevertheless advances.

57.h5 ♔f6 58. ♔f4 ♖e6 59. ♖e4 ♔g7

If he plays 59... ♖d7 and keeps the king on f6, I can even just push the g-pawn:

60.h6 ♖e6 61.g4 ♖xg4 62. ♔xg4 ♔f7 63. ♖h7, and the king won't get to the corner.

60. ♔g5 ♖d7 61.h6+



Once I get the pawn to h6, it's fairly trivial.

61... ♔h8 62. ♔f4 ♖e6 63. ♖f5 ♖f7 64.g4 ♖h5 65.g5 ♔g8 66. ♖e6+ ♔h7 67. ♔f5 ♖g6+ 68. ♔f6 ♔h8

Stalemate is his last chance.

69. ♖d7 ♖h5 70. ♖c6

Now Black is in zugzwang. His bishop has no moves that prevent the decisive g6, and moving the king: 70... ♔h7 allows 71. ♖d5 ♖g6

71... ♔h8 runs into 72. ♖f7.

72. ♖g8+

And with the bishop gone, there is no stalemate. Black resigned.



To everyone's delight Boris Spassky attended the opening ceremony. The former World Champion, who now lives in Moscow, talked briefly with various of the participants.



NOTES BY
Dmitry Andreikin

CA 1.2 – E11
Vladimir Kramnik
Dmitry Andreikin
Moscow 2013 (7)

This game was played in Round 7. I was on 50 per cent, which I considered a good result. My opponent, Vladimir Kramnik, lagged one point behind me and certainly wanted to win.

1.d4

Recently, Vladimir has increasingly been using 1. ♘f3, with a transition to calm and closed positions.

1... ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3

I had not foreseen that this position would appear on the board, so here I already had to spend a bit of time.

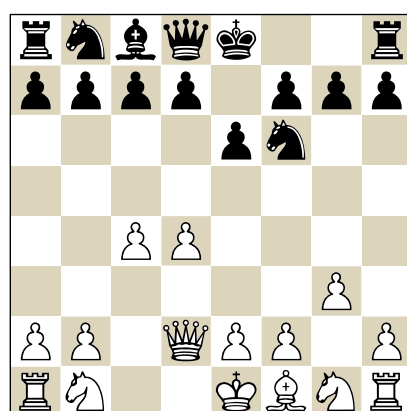
3... ♗b4+

Not a very principled move, but a very reliable one.

Sometimes I play 3...c5!?, when play can continue 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 b5 6.e4 ♖xe4 7. ♗e2 ♗e7 8. ♗g2 ♖d6 9. ♗e3. I did not dare to enter this difficult position without specific preparation, especially against such a strong theoretician as Vladimir Kramnik.

4. ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 5. ♗xd2

The idea of the early exchange of the dark-squared bishops is that if White recaptures with the knight on d2, I can arrange my pawn centre differently: 5. ♖xd2 d6!? 6. ♖gf3 0-0 7. ♗g2 ♗e7 8.0-0 e5, and Black has equalized.



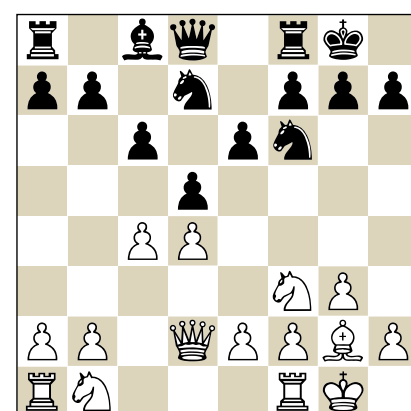
5...d5

Now I put the pawns on the light squares. In that case it is very important to solve the problem of the c8-bishop.

Recently, Magnus Carlsen has confidently been using this system for Black.

The first practitioner and perhaps the inventor of this reliable system is Ulf Andersson. In 1988, he made four draws and lost only one game from this position.

6. ♗g2 0-0 7. ♖f3 c6 8.0-0 ♖bd7





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9. ♖c1!?

I think this is the best move. The idea is simple: White protects the pawn on c4, and if Black plays ...b7-b6, the rook will occupy an excellent position after the pawn swap.

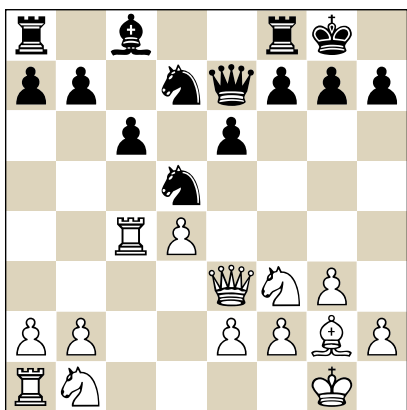
A few months ago I played this position as White, but my new creative plan was not good: 9. ♖c3?! b6! (this move equalizes) 10. cxd5 cxd5 11. ♖a3 a5 12. ♖c1 ♖a6 13. e3 ♖b8 14. ♘bd2 ♖c8 15. ♖e7 ♖e8 16. ♖a3 ♖c8 17. ♖e7 ♖e8 18. ♖a3, with a draw in Andreikin-Ibragimov, Loo 2013.

9... ♖e7 10. ♖e3 dxc4!?

I played this move with the game Khairullin-Zviagintsev, St. Petersburg 2012, in mind.

Usually Black plays 10... ♖e8!?, with the idea to aim for ...e6-e5.

11. ♖xc4 ♘d5



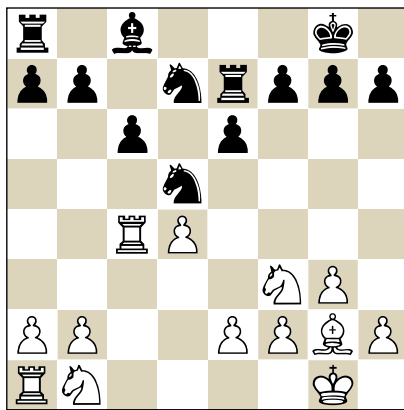
12. ♖a3!

A new and strong move. I knew 12. ♖e4?! f5 13. ♖d3 b6! 14. ♖c1 ♖b7 15. ♘bd2 e5 16. e4 fxe4 17. ♘xe4 ♖ae8 18. ♖e1 h6 19. ♖e2 c5 20. ♘xe5 ♘xe5 21. dxe5 ♘b4 22. ♖b3+ ♖h8 23. ♘d6 ♖xg2 24. ♖xg2 ♖d8 25. ♖c4 ♘c6 26. f4 ♘d4 27. ♖f2 ♖xd6 28. exd6 ♖e4+ 29. ♖h3 ♖f5 30. g4 ♖e3+ 31. ♖g2 ♖e4+ 32. ♖h3 ♖e3+ 33. ♖g2, with a draw in the aforesaid game between Khairullin and Zviagintsev.

12... ♖e8

A logical move. An interesting alternative was to lure the white knight to a3: 12... ♖xa3!? 13. ♘xa3 ♖d8!? 14. ♖cc1 ♘7b6, when the knight can get back into play after 15. ♘b1!?, with a white edge.

13. ♖xe7 ♖xe7



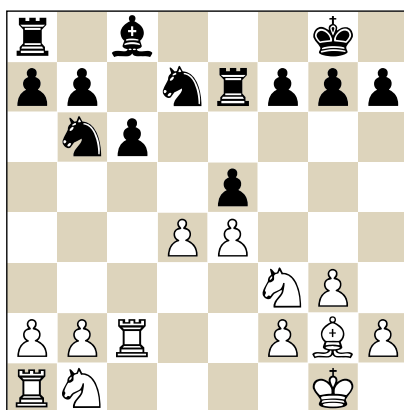
14. e4

An attempt to obstruct the advance ...e6-e5 only leads to a change in move-order: 14. ♖c2 ♘5b6! (bad is the immediate 14... e5? because of 15. ♘xe5 ♘xe5 16. ♖xd5! ♖f5 17. ♖d2 cxd5 18. dxe5 ♖xb1 19. ♖xb1 ♖xe5 20. ♖c1, with a clear advantage for White) 15. ♘bd2 e5 16. e4, with a white edge.

14... ♘5b6 15. ♖c2

15. ♖b4?! won't yield White anything: 15... c5 16. dxc5 ♘xc5 17. ♘c3 ♖d7 18. ♖d1 ♖c8, with equality.

15... e5

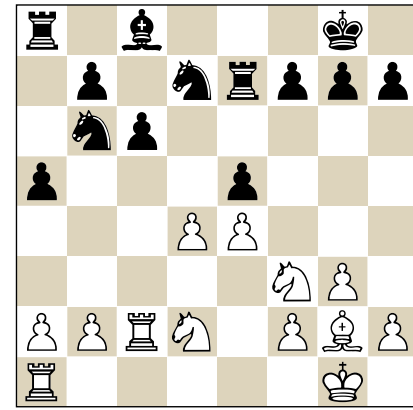


16. ♘bd2

From this moment on many of my opponent's ideas came as a surprise to me. For example, I was sure that the knight would be better placed on c3: 16. ♘c3!? exd4 17. ♘xd4 g6 18. f4 a5 19. ♖d1 ♘c5 20. e5 ♖g4 21. ♖f3 ♖xf3 22. ♘xf3, and White is slightly better.

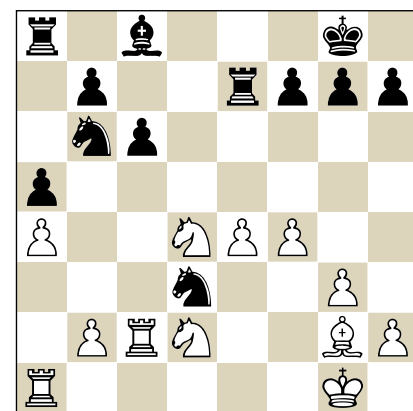
16... a5!?

I like this move. I thought that on the next move White wanted to play a2-a4, forcing me to reply ...a7-a5. Next the white knight would go to b3, creating positional pressure. I decided to define the pawn-structure as quickly as possible.



17. a3 Again, a move which I did not quite understand.

The idea of my last move was connected with the following option: 17. a4 exd4 18. ♘xd4 ♘e5 19. f4 ♘d3

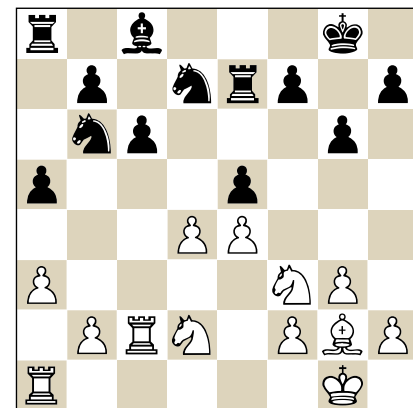


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and instead of a passive post on f8, the knight obtains a good square on b4: 20. ♘2b3 ♘b4 21. ♖c5 ♘d3 22. ♖c2 ♘b4, with a draw.

Well, if the pawn move is not good, why not just activate the rook?!: 17. ♖d1!? g6 18. ♘f1!? exd4 19. ♘xd4 ♖g7 20. ♘e3, and White retains an edge.

17... g6 A useful prophylactic move that contains two ideas: to vacate the g7-square for the king and, after the exchange of the central pawns, to take control of the important point f5, where the white knight would like to go.



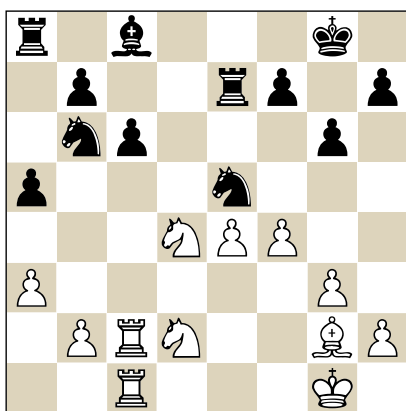
18.♖ac1

Surprise number three! The idea of this move is understandable: White threatens to play d4-d5, thus forcing me to exchange pawns now. In my view it was logical to put the rook on d1: 18.♖d1!? ♔g7 19.♘f1 exd4 (19... a4?! runs into 20.d5!) 20.♘xd4 ♘f8 21.♘e3 ♘e6 22.♘e2 ♖d7, with equal chances.

18...exd4 19.♘xd4 ♘e5

Now the black pieces are activated and the position is no longer dangerous for me.

20.f4



20...♖d7!

A small tactical trick! The captured d-file will be very useful for me in the future!

21.♘e2

White is forced to retreat since there was nothing better. After 21.♘b3 a4 22.fxe5 axb3 23.♘xb3 ♖e7 Black is fine. And after 21.♘4b3 ♘d3 22.♖d1 a4 23.♘a1?! (23.♘c1 is good enough for equality) 23...♖d6 24.e5 ♔g4! Black even takes the initiative.

21...♘g4

At this point I had about 15 minutes left, so I did not consider the consequences of the knight jump to d3. Humanly, it looks dangerous, because from d3 there is no way to retreat. But Houdini confidently leads the knight forward: 21...♘d3!? 22.♖d1 ♔g7!?, and considers the chances to be balanced.

22.♘f1 Another white knight is forced to take up the defence!

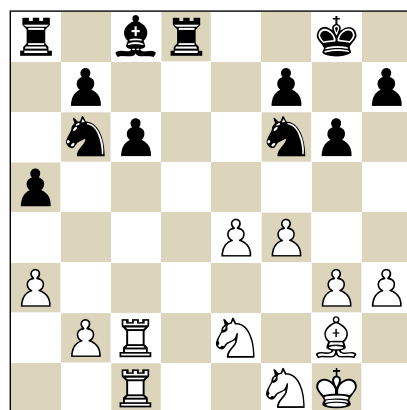
22...♖d8 An easy move. The black bishop enters the game!

23.h3 ♘f6

NEW IN CHESS

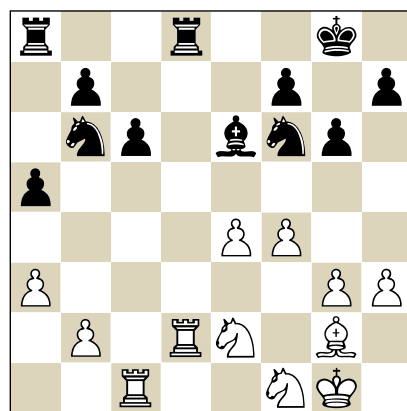


Tal debutant Dmitry Andreikin has reached a winning endgame against Vladimir Kramnik and they both know it.



After all the manoeuvring the evaluation of the position has not changed: it's equal.

24.♖d2 ♔e6



25.♔f2?!

Too slow. All White's problems started with this move. There are no queens on the board, but there is a lot of other

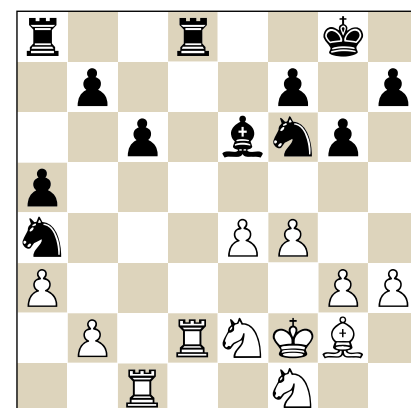
material remaining. In such a situation the king in the centre is sometimes in danger.

I was afraid of another move: 25.♘d4! ♘c4 26.♘xe6 ♘xd2 27.♘xd8 ♘xf1 28.♔xf1 ♖xd8 29.♔e2 ♘h5! 30.♖c3. I saw this line during the game, but I found it difficult to assess this position. Black's pieces look very active, whereas White's pieces do not have any active ideas. But if White can expel the black knight from h5, the white position would be preferable in the endgame.

I think my opponent should have gone for this position without any risk. Only White has practical winning chances.

25...♘a4!

Now Black is moving into action! This move contains some traps.

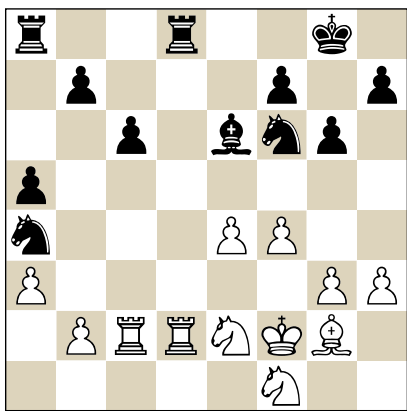


26. ♖cc2!

The strongest move. My tactical ideas included the following options:

26. ♖cd1? ♜xd2 27. ♖xd2 ♙xh3! 28. ♙xh3 ♘xe4+ 29. ♙e3 ♘xd2 30. ♘xd2 ♘xb2, and Black wins.

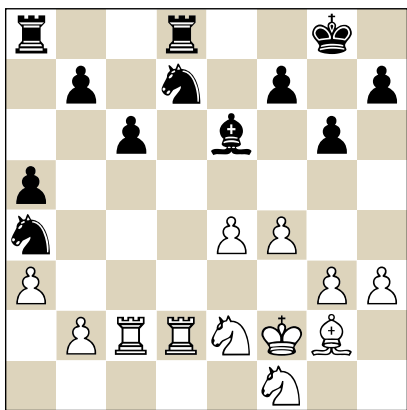
Or 26. ♘d4 ♘xb2 27. ♖xb2 ♜xd4 28. ♖xb7 ♜a4!?, with a likely draw.



26... ♘d7!

This move keeps the tension! At this point both players were short of time. I thought that in mutual time-trouble my chances were not worse and that we were playing for all three possible results!

It would have been stupid to play 26... ♙b3?!, which would require precision to reach a draw: 27. ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 28. ♖d2 ♜xd2 29. ♘xd2 ♙d1 (29... ♙e6 30. b3 ♘c5 31. ♘d4 is pleasant for White) 30. b3 ♙xe2 31. bxa4! ♙a6 32. ♘b3 b6 33. e5 ♘d5 34. ♙xd5 cxd5 35. ♙e3, and it's only White who still has some chances.



27. ♙e3??

Not a surprise, but rather a gift for me! I think this error was connected with a tactical blunder.

White could have maintained equality with simple moves: 27. ♘d4!? ♘dc5

28. ♘xe6 fxe6 29. ♙e3 ♘b3 30. ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 31. ♙f3, and it should be a draw.

27... ♙b3 28. ♖c1

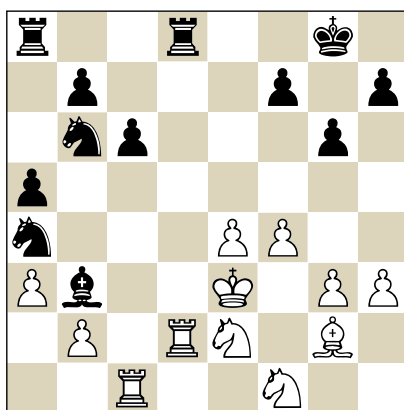
The only move.

28... ♘db6!

The black knight moved from f6 to b6 and brought victory! The black pieces

'The first Russian win came in Round 7, when in a fairly innocuous position Kramnik slipped up against Dmitry Andreikin.'

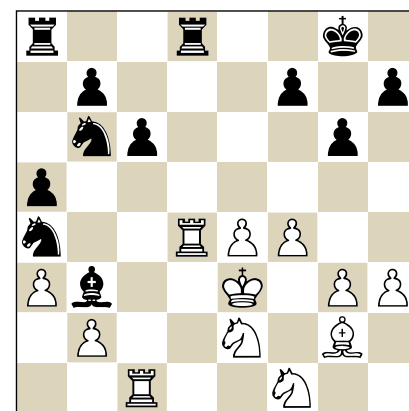
only needed a few moves to take the best positions!



29. ♖d4

This move was made after a long think. I think that White miscalculated the following variations: 29. ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 30. ♘d2 ♘xb2! (maybe when he made his 27th move my opponent did not see this possibility) 31. ♘b3 ♜d3+ 32. ♙f2 ♜xb3, and wins.

29. ♘d4 ♘c4+ 30. ♖xc4 ♙xc4 31. b3 ♘b6! (also winning is 31... ♙xf1) 32. bxc4 ♘xc4+ 33. ♙d3 ♘xd2 34. ♘xd2 c5, and Black wins.

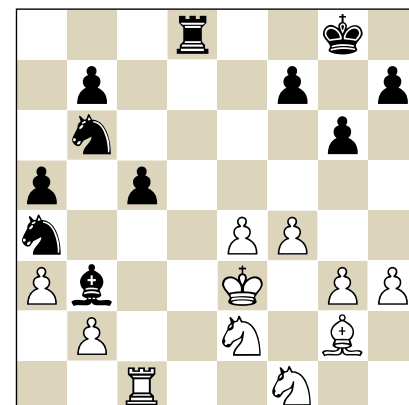


29... c5!

The last precise move! After 29... ♘xb2?! 30. ♘d2 White is down a pawn, but the game continues.

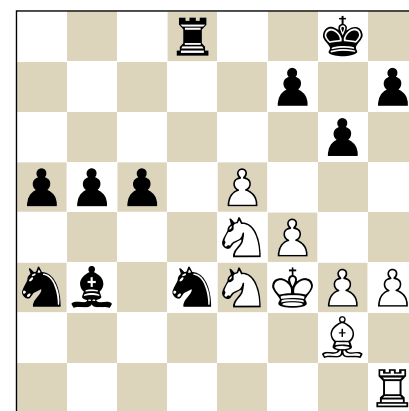
30. ♖xd8+ ♜xd8

Complete domination by the black pieces! White's queenside will collapse in a few moves. Further comments are not necessary, now everything is easy.



31. e5 Equally hopeless is 31. ♘d2 ♘xb2 32. ♘xb3 ♜d3+ 33. ♙f2 ♜xb3 34. ♖xc5 ♘d3+, and wins.

31... ♘c4+ 32. ♙f3 ♘axb2 33. ♘c3 ♘xa3 34. ♘e3 b5 35. ♘e4 ♘d3 36. ♖h1



36... ♘c2 37. ♘xc2 ♙xc2 38. h4 b4 39. h5 gxh5 40. ♘f6+ ♙f8 41. ♙e3 b3 42. ♘d5

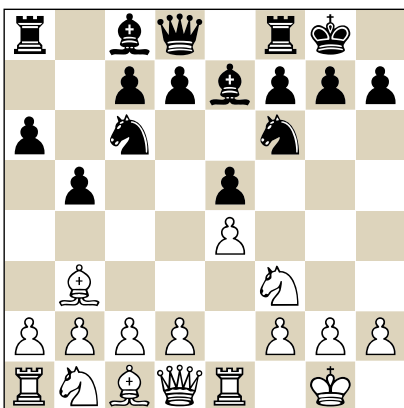
White resigned.



NOTES BY
Fabiano Caruana

RL 17.2 – C88
Vishy Anand
Fabiano Caruana
Moscow 2013 (1)

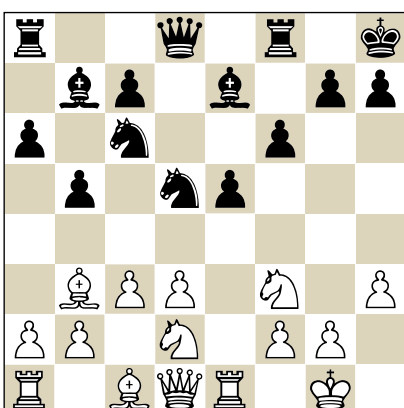
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♙b3 0-0



8.h3 ♙b7 9.d3 d5 10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♘bd2 f6 12.c3

Not exactly a new move, but not one which I had spent much time analysing. The main focus of attention in this position has been 12.c4.

12...♙h8 I spent a long time deciding between this move and the principled 12...♘a5. As usual, I probably made the wrong choice.



13.♙c2 This move may look passive, but it has a purpose: White is planning ♘b3 and d4, when he can recapture on d4 with a piece. During the game I was most worried about 13.d4 exd4 14.cxd4.

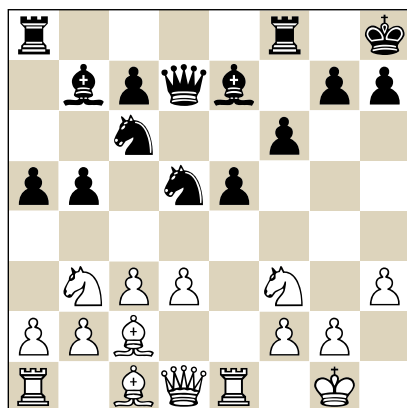
13...♖d7 I spent some time trying to make 13...f5 work, but I couldn't find

sufficient compensation after 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♖xe5 ♙d6 16.♖e1, and next ♘f3 covers everything.

I was also considering 13...b4 14.c4 ♘f4 15.♘b3 ♘e6 16.d4 ♘cxd4 17.♘fxd4 ♘xd4 18.♘xd4 exd4, and felt it was very dangerous for Black, but in fact it isn't easy for White to prove any advantage.

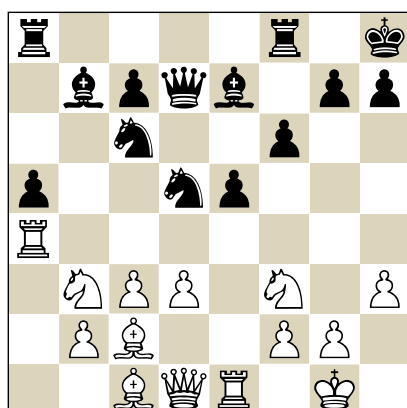
14.♘b3 a5

Taking measures against d4.



15.a4 After 15.d4 a4 16.♘c5 ♙xc5 17.dxc5 ♖fd8 18.♖d3 g6, Black has total control over the light squares.

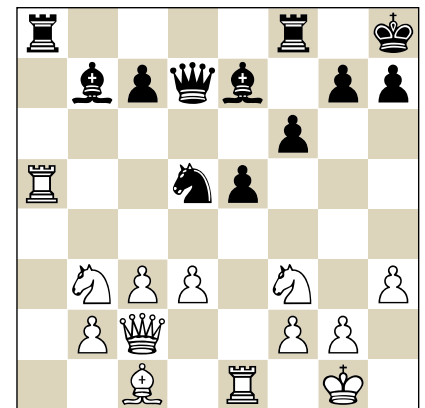
15...bxa4 16.♖xa4



16...♘cb4 At this point I was already committed to a pawn sacrifice. For the pawn I eliminated White's bishop, and I was happy my king would finally feel secure.

I couldn't afford to allow White's rook to h4: 16...♘b6 17.♖h4! f5, and here I stopped calculating when I saw 18.♘g5, with what seemed to be a tremendous attack. Instead, the machine suggests 18.d4!?, a move which, to put it mildly, I find shocking. Since I don't understand much in this position, I'll trust Houdini and say White has an advantage.

17.♖xa5 ♘xc2 18.♖xc2



18...♘b6 Too hesitant. I should have played the energetic 18...g5, when the

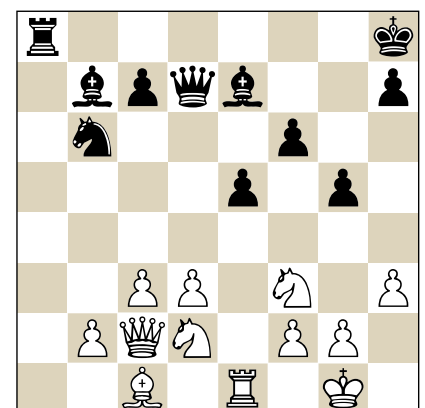
With a win in the last round, Caruana would even have reached 2800, a figure that he tries not to think of. 'It either happens or it doesn't.'

position is completely unclear and Black has full compensation for the pawn.

19.♖xa8 ♖xa8 20.♘bd2 g5

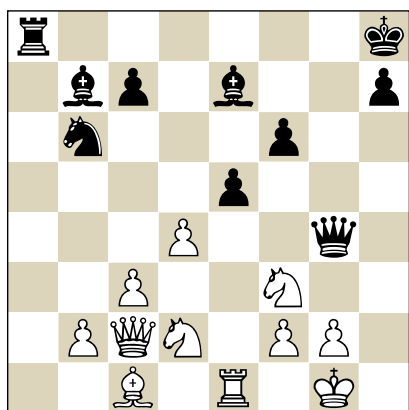
A little bit late, but it's still okay.

20...c5 21.♘e4 ♘d5 was also a perfectly viable option. Black keeps reasonable compensation.



21. ♖h2 In hindsight this looks like a mistake, but during the game it was the move I expected.

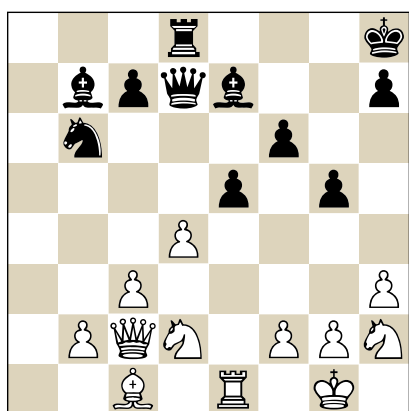
It seems risky for White to play 21.d4 and allow 21...g4 22.hxg4 ♕xg4, and I felt like I would have a strong attack here, but White has more than sufficient defensive resources.



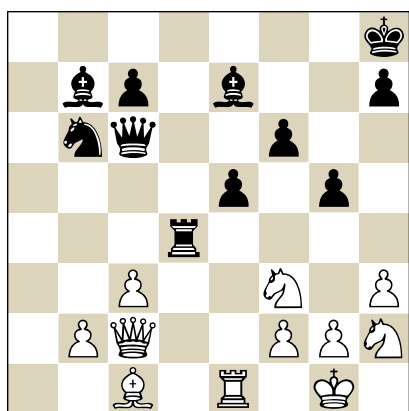
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A possible variation is 23. ♖e4 ♕g8 24. ♖g3 h5 25. ♖xe5 fxe5 26. ♕xe5 ♖g5 27. ♖xg5 ♕xg5, and White has a perpetual with 28. ♕e8+ ♕g8 29. ♕e5, but no more.

21... ♕d8 22.d4



22... exd4 I spent a lot of time on 22... ♕c6, but wasn't satisfied with 23. ♕e4 (23. ♖df3 ♕xd4!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM



NEW IN CHESS

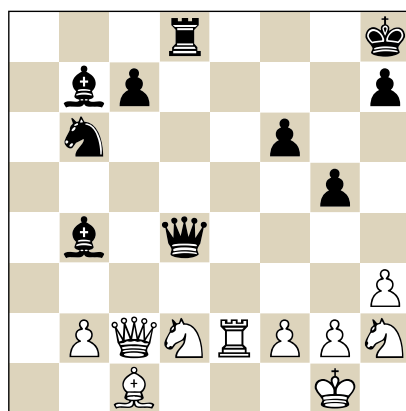
Fabiano Caruana was unhappy with his play, but thanks to expert damage control and Kramnik's rating loss, the Italian climbed to third place in the world rankings.

utilizing two pins, is the point behind 22... ♕c6) 23... ♕xe4 24. ♖xe4 exd4 25. ♖g4, when I even felt I would be worse, which is of course not the case, but Black won't be better either.

23.cxd4 ♖b4 24. ♕e2

I was mostly concerned about 24. ♖g4, when I planned the simple 24... ♖d5. The machine is very optimistic for Black, but during the game I had no ambitions beyond equality.

24... ♕xd4



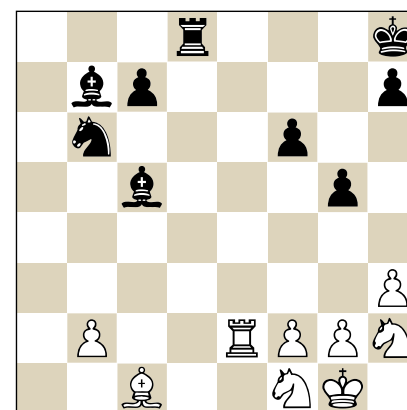
25. ♖df1?

This is Vishy's first very serious mistake, and after it he is on the verge of losing.

Although it looks risky, White should

bite the bullet with 25. ♕xc7, when he will probably survive. For example, 25... ♕d5 26. ♖hf3 ♖a8 27. ♕c2 ♕c8 28. ♕d1 is a variation I gave in the press conference after the game, and White has got over the worst of it.

25... ♕c5 26. ♕xc5 ♖xc5

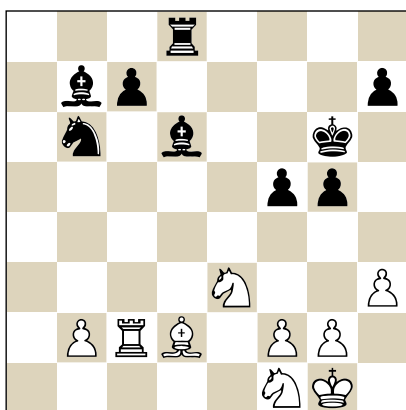


This endgame is extremely unpleasant for White. Black's advantage is enduring and there is no way for the defender to release the tension.

27. ♕c2 ♖d6 28. ♖g4 ♖g7 29. ♖d2 ♖g6

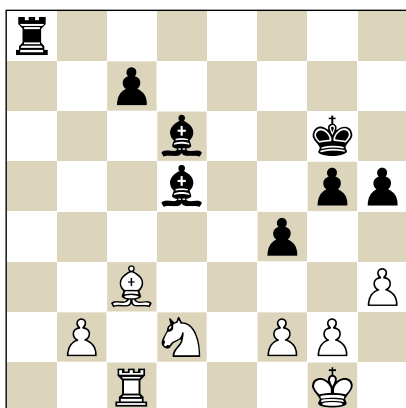
I can calmly start advancing on the kingside.

30. ♖ge3 f5

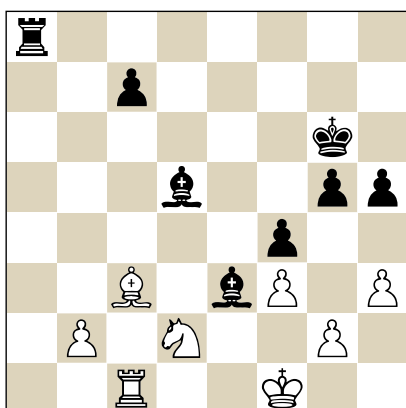


31. ♖c4 Trades don't ease White's defensive task. The bishop pair is a tremendous force, even in simplified positions.

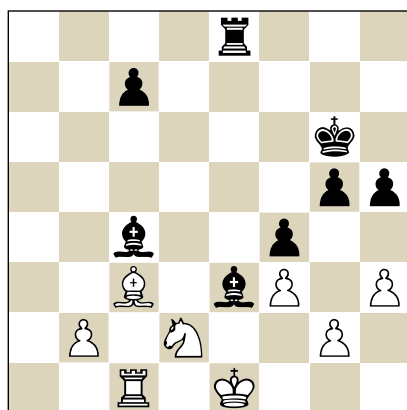
31... ♖xc4 32. ♖xc4 ♖a8 33. ♖c1 f4 34. ♖c3 h5 35. ♖d2 ♖d5



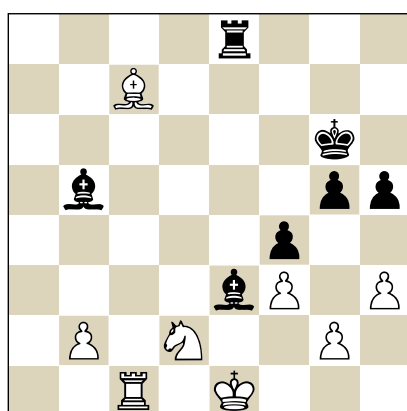
36. f3? After this I encroach even more on White's territory. **36... ♖c5+ 37. ♖f1 ♖e3** Now the situation has become really critical for White. Only with extremely accurate play can he attempt to hold the balance. His next move, however, was a blunder which loses immediately.



38. ♖e2? ♖c4+ Now it's all over. **39. ♖e1 39. ♖d1 ♖f1** picks up all White's kingside pawns. The tactical point is **40. ♖xf1 ♖xc1 41. ♖xc1 ♖a1+. 39... ♖e8**



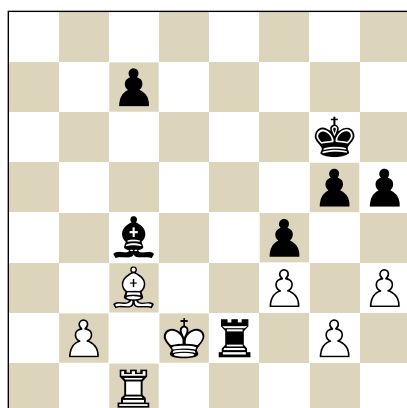
40. ♖d1 During the game I started to get worried by the clever **40. ♖e5!?**, which would have been a great last chance. After **40... ♖b5 41. ♖xc7,**



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

I would have to find the study-like **41... ♖e7!!**, and the bishop on c7 is trapped! (Instead, something like **41... ♖b6+?** **42. ♖e4** gives Black nothing.) Now **42. ♖d8 ♖d7 43. ♖a5 ♖xd2+ 44. ♖xd2 ♖e7+** and White is completely dominated.

40... ♖xd2 41. ♖xd2 ♖e2+



Mopping up White's kingside.

42. ♖d1 ♖xg2 43. ♖d4 ♖e2+ 44. ♖e1 ♖xf3 45. ♖xc7 ♖e2+ 46. ♖f1 ♖h2 47. ♖g7+ ♖f5

White resigned.



NOTES BY

Hikaru Nakamura

RL 3.1 – C60

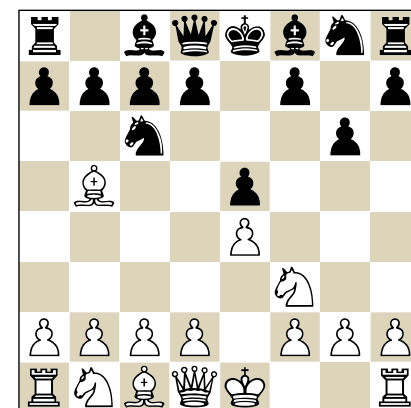
Vishy Anand

Hikaru Nakamura

Moscow 2013 (6)

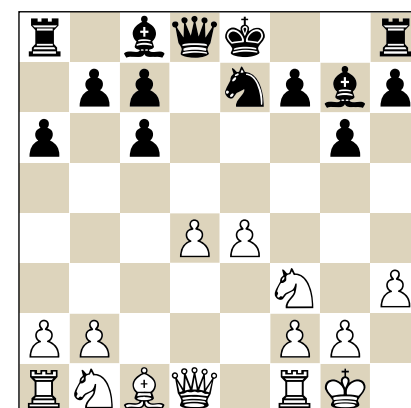
For the second time in just over two weeks, I was faced with another black against Vishy. In our previous game in Norway, I had won with the Arkhangelsk system of the Ruy Lopez. This time around, I wanted to mix it up a bit and felt like being original.

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♖b5 g6



The first surprise for Vishy. I do play a bit of everything, but on this particular day, I was feeling a little bit inspired by the SSS (Steinitz, Smyslov and Spassky) and their games in this system.

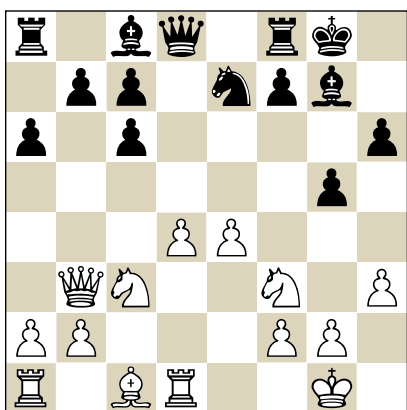
4. 0-0 ♖g7 5. c3 a6 6. ♖xc6 dxc6 7. d4 exd4 8. cxd4 ♖e7 9. h3



Houdini's recommendation. While it is completely logical, I do think it gives Black an easy target later on.

9. ♖e3!? is another interesting move.

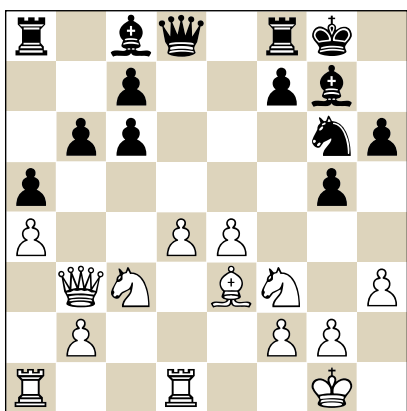
9... 0-0 10. ♖c3 h6 11. ♖b3 g5 12. ♖d1



12...b6

12...♔d6!? is an interesting concept, with the idea of eventually transferring the queen to g6.

13.a4 a5 14.♕e3 ♖g6



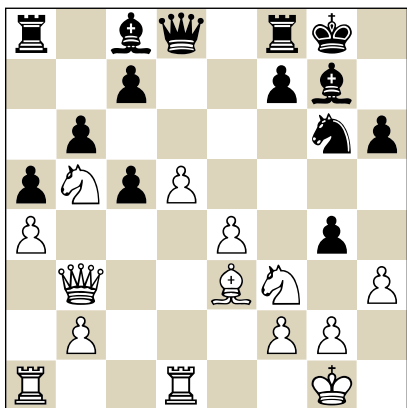
15.d5 The direct approach.

I was much more worried about 15. ♘e2, as c6 will come under pressure, and a knight on g3 will take much of the sting out of an eventual ...f5 pawn break.

15...c5 16.♘b5 g4!

All-in!

The computers seem to think that Black is OK after 16...♕a6 17.♘d2 ♖e8 18.f3, but I did not like the lack of clear ideas and a worse pawn-structure with no attack. At the same time White will always have the annoying d6 at some point.



17.hxg4 ♕xg4 18.♕d2

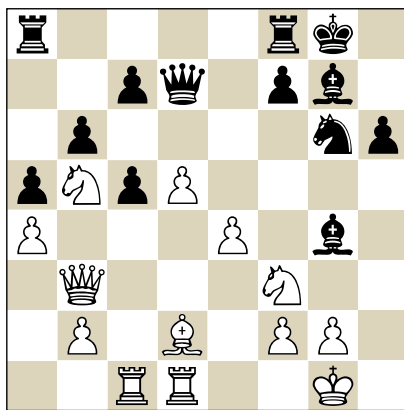
While it is very hard for a human to see the difference, the bishop is seemingly inaccurately placed here due to tactics involving ...c6. In fairness, what human would go 18. ♕c1 and stop the rook on a1 from joining the

‘On this particular day, I was feeling a little bit inspired by the SSS (Steinitz, Smyslov and Spassky) and their games in this system.’

game? Welcome to chess in 2013!

The computers give White the advantage after 18. ♕c1 ♖h7 19. ♖e1 ♖e8 20. ♖a3!?, but I think that for humans the position remains dynamically balanced.

18...♔d7 19.♖ac1



19...c6?! A logical move, but there were better options.

After 19...♖ad8! 20. ♖e1 (in case of 20. ♘a7 f5 Black will end up winning material or having a crushing attack) 20...c6 21.dxc6 ♔xc6 Black has com-

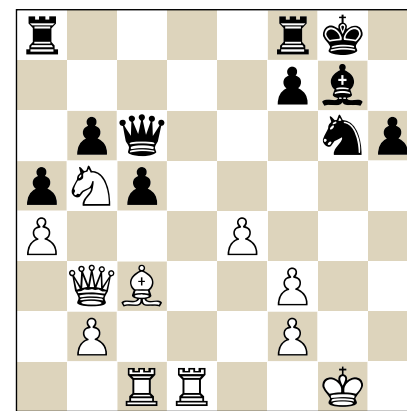
plete control of the d-file unlike in the game and this leads to a much bigger advantage.

20.dxc6 ♔xc6 21.♕c3

Now, unlike in the line with 19...♖ad8, White has control of the d-file and ♖d6 is always an idea.

21...♕xf3 22.gxf3

Here I used a good 20 minutes trying to figure out what was the best way to continue.



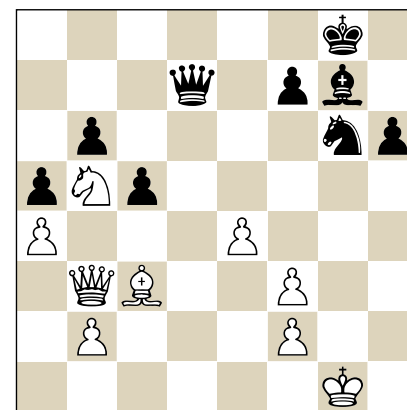
22...♖ad8

My original idea was 22...♘f4 and I looked at 23. ♖d6 ♔c8 24. ♕d2! ♘e2+ 25. ♔g2 ♘xc1 26. ♕xc1 ♖d8 27. ♔d5 ♖b8 28. ♕f4 – I stopped in my analysis here as I felt I still had an advantage but I wanted more. The line might continue 28...♖xd6 29. ♔xd6 ♖b7 30. ♕xh6 ♕xh6 31. ♔xh6 ♔e6, when Black still remains substantially better, but it will require some technique.

23.♖xd8

After 23. ♕xg7 ♖xg7 24. ♔f1! (the computer move!) 24...♔e6 Black still keeps an advantage, but it is not decisive.

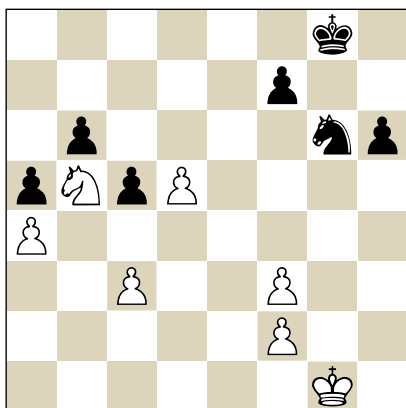
23...♖xd8 24.♖d1 ♖d7 25.♖xd7 ♔xd7



26.♔d5?!

I saw 26. ♔xg7 ♔xg7 27. ♖c3+ f6 28. ♖e3 ♖h3 29. ♘d6 ♘h4 30. ♘f5+ ♘xf5 31. exf5 ♖xf5 32. ♖e7+ ♔g6, but when there was no repetition, I assumed I must be winning somehow with the extra pawn. As it turns out, the position is a draw: 33. ♖e8+ ♔g5 34. ♖e3+ ♖f4 35. ♖b3! and I see no way for Black to make progress in this queen endgame.

26... ♖xd5 27. exd5 ♔xc3 28. bxc3

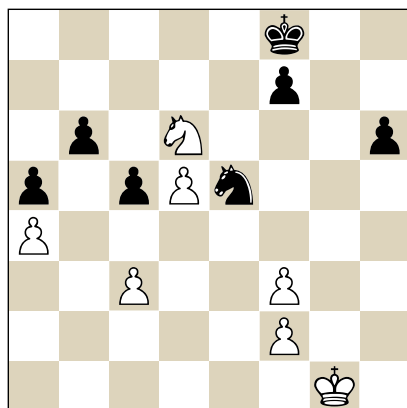


28... ♘e5?

The wrong order. I missed the nuances of giving the knight more squares by delaying.

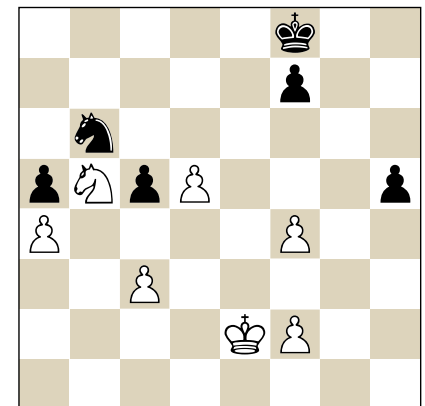
Correct was 28... ♔f8 29. ♘d6 (after 29. ♔h2 ♘f4! 30. c4 ♘d3 Black will scoop up the c4- or a4-pawn, leading to a winning endgame) 29... ♘f4! (the key difference) 30. c4 ♘d3 31. ♘c8 ♔e8 32. ♘xb6 ♔e7! – similar to the game, but not allowing any opportunities.

29. ♘d6 ♔f8



30. ♔h2

After 30. ♔f1, 30...b5!! is the only way to win (every other line leads to a draw): 31. ♘xb5 ♘c4 32. ♔e2 h5 33. f4 ♘b6.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Unlike in the other lines, the pawn on a5 won't be captured and therefore it should be a routine win.

– 30... ♔e7 31. ♘c8+ ♔d8 32. ♘xb6 ♔c7 33. f4 ♘d3 34. ♘c4 ♘xf4 35. d6+ ♔d7 36. ♘xa5 ♔xd6 37. ♘b7+ ♔c6 38. ♘d8+ is a draw, and so is:

– 30... ♘xf3 31. ♘c4 ♘g5 32. ♘xb6

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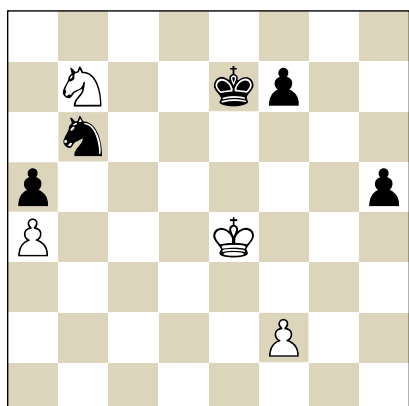
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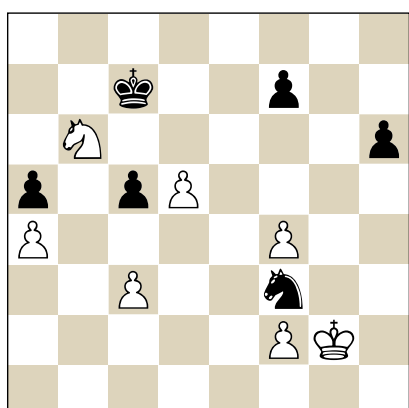
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♖e4 33.♙e2 h5 34.♙e3 ♜xc3 35.
♜d7+ ♙e7 36.♜xc5 ♜xd5+ 37.♙e4
♜b6 38.♜b7,



when Black is still better, but this should be a draw once the a-pawns are exchanged.

30...♙e7 31.♜c8+ ♙d7 32. ♜xb6+ ♙c7 33.f4 ♜f3+ 34.♙g2



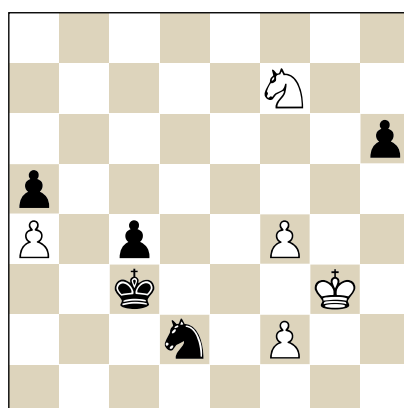
34...♜d2?!

Not the best, but fortunately it was still winning.

More straightforward was 34...♜e1+ 35.♙f1 ♙xb6 36.♙xe1 c4, with an easily winning king and pawn endgame.

NEW IN CHESS

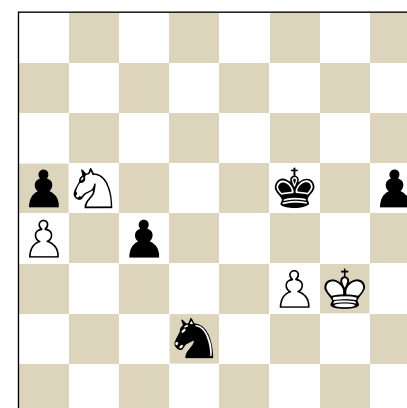
35.♜a8+ ♙b7 36.d6 ♙c6 37.♜c7 ♙xd6 38.♜b5+ ♙d5 39.♙g3 ♙c4 40.♜d6+ ♙xc3 41.♜xf7 c4



42.f5 Or 42.♜d6 ♙d3 43.f5 c3 44.f6 c2 45.f7 c1 ♙ 46.f8 ♙ ♙g1+ 47.♙h3

(no improvement is 47.♙h4 ♙h2+ 48.♙g4 ♙g2+ 49.♙h4 - 49.♙f5 ♙xf2+ - 49...♜f3+ 50.♙h5 ♙g5 mate) 47...♙h1+ 48.♙g3 (48.♙g4 ♙g2+ leads to the previous line) 48...♜f1+ 49.♙g4 ♙g2+ 50.♙h4 ♙g5+ 51.♙h3 ♙h5+ 52.♙g2 ♙h2+! 53.♙f3 ♜d2+ 54.♙g4 ♙g2+, transposing back into the first alternate line.

42...♙d4 43.♜d6 ♙e5 44.♜b5 ♙xf5 45.f3 h5



Here Vishy resigned, as it will simply be too hard to stop both the c- and h-pawns.

An exciting game, and one where I understood the urgency and danger in the position a little bit better than the World Champion. ■

For the second time in just over two weeks, Hikaru Nakamura beat the World Champion with the black pieces. 'This time around, I wanted to mix it up a bit and felt like being original.'

Moscow 2013

cat. XXII

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		TPR	
1	Boris Gelfand	IGM	ISR	2755	*	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	½	½	6	2905
2	Magnus Carlsen	IGM	NOR	2864	½	*	½	½	0	1	½	½	1	1	5½	2848
3	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	IGM	AZE	2753	½	½	*	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	5	2823
4	Dmitry Andreikin	IGM	RUS	2713	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	5	2828
5	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	ITA	2774	0	1	½	½	*	0	½	1	1	½	5	2821
6	Hikaru Nakamura	IGM	USA	2784	0	0	0	½	1	*	1	0	1	1	4½	2777
7	Sergey Karjakin	IGM	RUS	2782	½	½	½	½	½	0	*	½	½	½	4	2734
8	Alexander Morozevich	IGM	RUS	2760	0	½	½	½	0	1	½	*	0	½	3½	2699
9	Viswanathan Anand	IGM	IND	2786	½	0	½	½	0	0	½	1	*	½	3½	2696
10	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2803	½	0	½	0	½	0	½	½	½	*	3	2650

Boris

‘Experience and lessons that you’ve learned in life are no less valuable than youth or energy’



NEW IN CHESS

He instils hope in the ‘older generation’, who increasingly began to fear that inevitable decline sets in after 30. At 45, buoyant after one of the finest successes ever at the Tal Memorial, Boris Gelfand happily cites Viktor Kortchnoi, who told him long ago that *he* had reached the pinnacle of his career at 47. Still, it cannot be denied that the Israeli number one is

fairly unique and that his recent victories are the fruits of a balanced life philosophy and an almost monastic dedication to the game that he is still passionate about. Following Gelfand’s triumph in Moscow, **Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam** spoke with him at length about his unwavering ambition, his father, Petrosian and other people that inspired him, his striving for logic on and off the board and much more.

‘The recent results show that when I said I intended to fight for the Candidates’ and intended to win, I meant it.’

Gelfand:



Although we met in Moscow, we agreed to talk via Skype some days after the tournament. Immediately after the last round there was a long line of journalists wanting to speak to him, and we didn't want time-trouble to play a part in our conversation. Three days later, from my study at home, I reach Boris Gelfand in his study in Rishon LeZion. To begin with I congratulate him on his 45th birthday and apologize that I do so 48 hours late. Good-humouredly he replies that this is even better. Last Monday many people had called and wished him well. Today I am the first. He is in a good mood and looks relaxed. As a family man he cherishes the days he spends at home, but he doesn't seem burdened by the fact that soon he will have to leave again – to the Grand Prix in Beijing. But after some small talk we quickly decide to get down to business.

When last year in Moscow you lost the World Championship match, you didn't look dejected, but spoke with gratitude about the great event you'd been part of and indicated that you hoped to play a role again in the next world championship cycle. Some people may have smiled and thought that they'd just seen the high point of your career, and they may have seen their doubts confirmed in London at the Candidates', where you couldn't play the part you had hoped for. These

same people must have scratched their heads when you shared first place in the Alekhine Memorial and then took clear first in the Tal Memorial.

'I think that the recent results show that when I said I intended to fight for the Candidates' and intended to win, I meant it. If you count the number of chances I had there, you can see that I had a chance, but unfortunately for me there were too many mistakes. I blundered so many times that I didn't deserve to win. But the preparation we did probably had a delayed effect. So things went well at the Alekhine Memorial and even better at the Tal Memorial.'

These results were the fruit of the work you'd done for London.

'It depends on how you see things. Some people prepare for certain tournaments and then they expect the effect immediately, while I think that

'We have the same goal and the same motivation. And the motivation is to do something better than yesterday.'

the work on chess is a continuous process. You can never know when you will harvest the fruits of your work. It may be immediately, it may be in the next tournament, it may be next year. If you prepare certain openings and you look at the first line of the computer, you don't have much time to use it, because everybody looks at the first line. But if you think yourself and find some original ideas

and analyse the position deeply, it will pay off in the years to come.'

Is that what you've always done? Whatever you do is part of a long-term project?

'Yes. You may remember that in the late 90s I used novelties that I had prepared in the late 80s or something. It also depends on how you see things. If you play different kinds of positions and have different ideas, you never know when it will pay off. If you are very pragmatic and look at what can happen in the next game or the next tournament, you will have fewer chances. But if you are curious and look at different things, the chances increase that one day you will be able to use them.'

But you've also been playing sharp openings that very much depend on new developments...

'Yeah. Of course, if you play the Najdorf you cannot even rely on analysis of two years ago. You have to update it permanently.'

While at the same time your results in the Najdorf depend on your huge experience and your deep understanding of the system...

'Yeah. Like here I had this game against Fabiano Caruana, where he obviously was better prepared. After the opening he had an extra hour, but my experience in the Najdorf proved to be a more important factor.'

In your last two tournaments you didn't lose a single game. Is that stability a sign of maturity or is this recent solidity based on something else?

'I wouldn't draw any general conclusions, because I lost three games in the Candidates' and I could have lost more. My play was very erratic. I was lucky here in Tal that I didn't have any worse positions, while in Alekhine I had more problems. For instance, I could have lost to Kramnik at the end of the game. Losing is always possible. You are playing against the best play-

ers in the world; they are excellently prepared and they are highly motivated. If you want to play as solidly as possible, you may lose. But if you are in your best form and do better than your opponents, you sometimes manage not to lose a game.'

What were the crucial moments for you in the Tal Memorial?

'Actually, it was fantastic. It went well from the first day till the last. Already in the blitz tournament things went well. I didn't do especially well, I scored 50 per cent, but with the level of my play I could have won almost every game. At blitz with this two-second increment my hands and head are not so quick, but I had winning positions in most of the games, which is quite special for me. I am a decent blitz player, but nothing extraordinary. In Zug, when we played blitz at the opening, I could have lost all games. I played so poorly. But here somehow my head worked pretty well.'

Is that a matter of feeling well, or is it something that happens one day and doesn't happen the other day?

'You know, for me it's a mystery. Sometimes you prepare very intensely for a tournament. You rest, you do a lot of exercises and things just go poorly from the start. And sometimes you think that you are not too energetic and things are not perfect and you play the best tournament. It's too complicated to predict. And that's great, because if it were so simple then everybody could do it. I am sure each of the players wants to do well in each of the events, but some of them do well in one event and some in another.'

Independent of the why, it remains remarkable that on the eve of your 45th birthday you win one of the strongest tournaments in your career. With what thoughts and feelings does this fill you?

'It's a great feeling. Of course it's fantastic to win such a prestigious tournament. Almost all the best players of the world took part. Also, in all modesty,



NEW IN CHESS

Boris Gelfand and Alexander Khuzman, a formidable team for 23 years already.
'Each time we set up the pieces, we are happy to analyse.'

it was well deserved, because I think I played better than anyone else in this tournament. I think it just proves that all these ideas that there is an age limit, that the limit is 30 or something, that these are false. The problem is that too many people lose motivation after a certain age. As long as you remain motivated, you can continue to do well. Experience and the lessons that you've learned in life are no less valuable than youth or energy.'

Do you feel that you are still as much in love with chess as you have ever been?

'Yeah, of course, it's fantastic. I should mention here that I am very privileged that I have a very good assistant, Alexander Khuzman, who is older than me. He turned 50 last year. He has the same motivation. Each time we set up the pieces, we are happy to analyse. I am sure that right now he is analysing some positions, and we will have something to discuss in the coming days. We have been working together since 1990.'

In many sports, and also in chess, players tend to change their coaches at some point. You have also worked with other people, but at the same time you've always continued to work with Alex-

ander. Does that explain part of your success?

'Yes, I think so. First of all I am very lucky to have Alexander. But it's also a question of attitude. We started working in 1990, before my first Candidates' match against Predrag Nikolic, and somewhere in '93 or '94 a player asked me, how come you've worked with him for three years already? I cannot work longer than a few months with somebody. I just ask a guy what he knows to see what use he can be to me. This is a totally different attitude. Either you want to get some information about an opening or a middlegame and you think that you're a genius and can do the rest yourself. Or you think you need to work day after day to improve yourself. I belong to the second school.'

What is it exactly that he brings to you?

'First of all he is a high-level player who understands chess. When I analyse a position, I have a sparring partner who understands chess amazingly well. In a way I feel sorry for him, because of his work with me he cannot play as much chess as he wants. He more or less gave up his playing career. Just before we left for Tal he played a very strong rapid tournament in Israel and did very well.

He works with me on a daily basis. He lives a hundred kilometres away from me. In the States that's next door, but in Israel it's half the country. He comes by car, it takes a hour, and then he drives back. Most days. Sometimes he does things at home and I do things at home. What's important is that we have the same goal and the same motivation. And the motivation is to do something better than yesterday.'

You are good friends, can he be tough on you?

'Yeah, of course he is tough on me. But sometimes he is right and sometimes he is not. He also gets very emotional and can get angry. Let's say we analyse something and then I forget it and play something totally different. He prepares a brilliant novelty and then I play another move and I almost lose... He reminds me of the things that he considers important. Such as my time management, which actually went perfectly at the Tal Memorial.'

And while you play the game he sees every detail that you will speak about afterwards...

'That is true. But he cannot see the whole game. When he is working with me, he has no time to do physical exercises. So while I am playing he goes to the pool or goes jogging or goes to the gym or whatever. He does much more sports than I do. I remember some European championship where someone told me that they were amazed that he spent the whole rest day doing sports. He played football, went swimming, went hiking. And most of the younger players were already tired around midday. And he continued from morning to evening. For him this is very important.'

You say that success in chess depends more on motivation and ambition than on age. Did you never have contemplative thoughts or rather doubts about the future of your career as the years passed by? Let's say when you turned 40?

'When I was 40, things were already



ETERI KUBLASHVILI

The 2012 World Championship match. Wherever Boris Gelfand went in Moscow he was closely followed by Israeli filmmaker Halil Efrat.

fine. When I was 30, 35, there were very few tournaments in the world, so I could not prove myself. And the predominant idea was that 30 was already old, so that makes you nervous. You work a lot and you have very few invitations or only one a year and you are very stressed because you have to prove yourself there and then. This was a difficult part of my life and career. I had more or less the same rating as I have now, but there were maybe three tournaments a year, so the competition to play there was much higher. And there were no world championships, so you could not do well in official events where everybody has a chance. Furthermore, there was this prevailing idea that after 30 you have to retire and that the organizers had to invite younger players. All this led to very difficult years. I remember when I got a chance in 2002 to play in Dortmund, the Candidates' tournament, I was so nervous I couldn't play at all. Because I kind of imagined it was my last chance. If I didn't do well maybe the next chance to play in big events would be in five years. So I couldn't cope with the stress.'

People around you say, 'Boris always goes his own way.' But one's own way is

always influenced by inspirations. Who were the people that helped you become the person and player you are now?

'First of all my father, of course. You knew him. I think he had the biggest influence. But of course, also my trainers who worked with me from childhood, especially Albert Kapengut, with whom I worked for many years. He had a very deep influence on my attitude towards chess.'

Your father also wrote a privately published book about you. How did that come about? Were these memories he had of your career that he wanted to put to paper?

'That was the idea and I helped him a lot. He made these scrapbooks, albums with clippings from our travels, all the score-sheets, boarding passes or articles from newspapers and magazines, or games that I had annotated. He made 60 of them, and the Israeli filmmaker Halil Efrat made a documentary about my match against Vishy and about these albums. It's called *Album 61* and next week it will be shown at the Jerusalem Documentary Film Festival. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend, because I will be in Beijing. In January it will be shown here on cable TV and hopefully it will be shown at

many prestigious festivals all around the world.'

Your father passed away. What role does he play now for you? If someone has been such a big influence, he often remains a kind of a beacon.

'Yes, of course. Most important are the life values which he taught me. They are still with me. The way I behave. One of the things he taught me is to be always very precise in the details of the work you do. That's not what he said, but that's what I learned from him. And you shouldn't think that you're a big hero. That's why for me celebrity is a negative word. You should do your things well, but you should know your place, with two feet on the ground.'

Have there been influences from outside the chess world that formed you as a person?

'No, I wouldn't say so. But whatever you see in the world influences your views. If you read about people in other fields, you will always find people who think the same as you and others who see things totally differently. Let's say if we talk about football, you have Xavi and David Beckham. They are totally different. The approach of Xavi is that you should improve and do things as best you can, and the approach of Beckham is that whatever happens in your career, media success is more important. These are two different approaches. One guy is in the shadow, but for specialists he is a total genius, who changed the world. And Beckham, for specialists he is a good player, but nothing special, but for the girls in Japan he is a hero. For many people he is a hero, they think he is great, but I rather see things the way Xavi does than Beckham.'

Rather than by Japanese girls you prefer to be appreciated by people who know about the game.

'Yeah, who really know. And fortunately we have a lot of those. I am very happy when at tournaments people come to you and tell you they liked

your game, and especially this or that move. This is impressive, that people have given it some thought.'

In your games there has always been a striving for logic, the moves have to be played according to some natural laws. Is this logic purely based on chess? Or is it also part of a bigger view of life in general?

'It is part of a bigger view. I think it is all connected. It's as if you gather the data of life. You see this in one newspaper, this in another, and you think, something is not right here. I always try to have common sense as the main value for me. You should judge things by common sense and not by emotions. In chess, too. Some move may look spectacular, but you should check if it's really good or not. The good thing in chess is that very often the best moves are the most beautiful ones. The beauty of logic.'

And the equivalent of logic in chess in everyday life is common sense.

'Of course. But in chess it's a bit different, because I have so much experience that often I feel that this move must be good or not. Where I follow my feeling and not some logic. And then you start to calculate to see if this is true. Of course chess is a very difficult game, deep and complicated, so you can be mistaken many times. But in most of the cases I have found out amongst the strongest players that the first move they suggest is correct. Even if you check old games with the computer. Moves made by Capablanca or Alekhine or Tal, and then the commentator said at the time that this move was a mistake, he should have played this. But now the computer often supports the ideas of these great players. Maybe they were missing some details, but at the critical moments they normally took the right decisions.'

The greats for you are Capablanca, Alekhine...

'All of them are great. All the World Champions and not only they, but all

those who played well and contributed a lot to the game of chess are great for me. My favourite player is Rubinstein, but I wouldn't cross out anyone else. We've had so many great players, especially in the 20th century, when chess was developing.'

Rubinstein also had this eye for logic and purity.

'That's what had such an impact on me. Probably when I was 10 or so, Yury Razuvaev's book *Akiba Rubinstein* was published. I'd come back from school, lie on the sofa and read the book without a board. Day after day. And I know of other players who did the same with this book or other books. That's how the views on chess were formed in those days. I studied most of the players. Unfortunately, there was no good book on Boris Spassky. And still there is no really good book on Spassky. There is the old book by Cafferty, but I believe that Spassky deserves a better one. Most of the others wrote about themselves, and this is the best. No one can annotate the games like the players themselves.'

The other day I was talking to Fabiano Caruana about your best games collection and he rightly stressed what a fantastic book it was. If you really study this book, you'll learn a lot. Yet it's far less well-known than many other recent games collections. Your games annotated to the best of your abilities, without any frills. Is that why it only reached a relatively small audience?

'Probably. Of course, I now know how to do things better. Just now I don't have time to write a second edition or a new book, but I know how it will be next time. The problem is that I cannot write well in English and that's what I did. Basically in any language I speak better than I write. I should probably ask someone to write it as I tell the stories and explain the games. That would be much better. I speak more comfortably and entertainingly than I write. In Russian, too. For me it's much more difficult to write than to speak. But at

the time they told me, it doesn't matter, just write it. Just do it. And as some kind of protest I tried to do the annotations as well as possible. Of course it should have been written by a professional. When I write, I am not a professional; I am a professional when I analyse. So I should team up with some professional who knows how to write well and then it will be much better. It's my ambition to write at least another couple of books to pass on my knowledge to the chess public, but right now there are so many great tournaments and my career is going so well...'

You mention Rubinstein as your favourite player. Yet, very often when I think of you I am reminded of Botvinnik. The way you conscientiously analyse your games, the walks you take to relax, the way you plan your schedule, not to play too much...

'I think you are right in noting this similarity, but in fact I studied Botvinnik less than anyone else. Botvinnik's games. I don't know why, because he really wrote some great books and I had them, but somehow I didn't study them deeply enough. I knew his idea that you should publish your games and be open to criticism, but I also annotate my games for the chess public. To my mind, if someone subscribes to a chess

magazine or buys a book, they should get the best quality, because we don't have millions of chess fans. The ones we have we have to respect and treat well. I had an argument in many interviews. I think we should treasure our spectators and our chess public, and not dream of having millions of fans who wouldn't be interested in our games. So the ones who are ready to spend time and money, they should get the best quality. And as for exercise, to be honest, I don't like all this gym stuff and all the modern things that are in fashion now. I find them illogical. I think that if you walk in the forest it's more healthy than if you go to the gym. That's common sense. That's why I always liked long walks. And it so happened that Botvinnik also liked them. Of course I have huge respect for him, but actually it's strange, I've never spoken with him in my life. I spoke with Smyslov a couple of times, a lot with Tal on the way to the Manila Interzonal, with Spassky, with Petrosian, with Polugaevsky, even with Geller, but with Botvinnik never.'

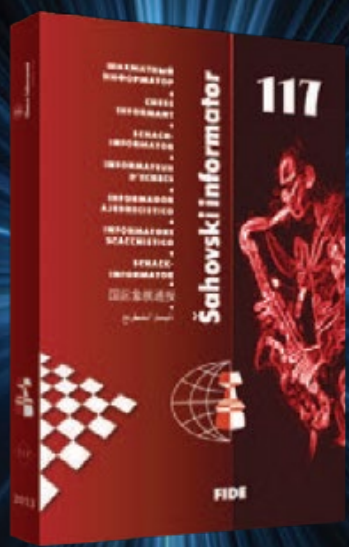
Which of them impressed you? As a kid you were studying with Petrosian...

'Yes, I had the privilege to spend more time with Petrosian. The Petrosian School was comparable to the Botvinnik-Kasparov School, or the Smyslov

School. But there was a clear distinction. Botvinnik and Kasparov were picking up all the best juniors. When Botvinnik started, it was Kasparov, Yusupov, all the best. And later the Botvinnik-Kasparov School was Kramnik, Svidler, Rublevsky, those guys. Petrosian could only pick players from the Spartak Club. The choice was much narrower. But what was good was that during these sessions he really devoted his time to us, from the first day to the last day he was with us morning to night. He talked about life, about other players, he played blitz with us. Probably the first time I saw a tape-recorder was with him. It was very expensive at the time and he brought it from some tournament abroad and let us kids listen to some music we had never heard before. But most important was the chess knowledge that he instilled in us. In two weeks' time you cannot teach a child to play chess, that's impossible, but you can give a few tips and you can influence them by your personality. First of all he taught me to think about every move. Even when you are playing blitz, you shouldn't make a move just to press the clock. If you see how I play blitz, you'll see that I play much slower than anybody else. Even when I only have seconds left I try to make moves with some sense. He was a fan-







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tastic blitz player. Do you know how he played with us? He asked us, on which square do you want to be mated? And of course, all of us were stupid and said, on a1. So he was picking up material, pushed the king there and gave mate. Of course, if we had said e5 or d5 it would have been much more difficult for him. Also he told us that sometimes you should think in general concepts. I once showed him a game in which I had an advantage, but I lost. Then he told me, you should exchange a pair of rooks, put the knight here, and improve the position of your pawns on this side. And you would win. That was important to learn, that you shouldn't think move after move, but that you should see the picture as a whole.

'His assistant was Alexander Nikitin, who was Garry's trainer. He tried to be strict on us. And Petrosian would say, ah leave Boris alone, he hasn't done his homework, forgotten half a year, doesn't matter, who cares? He's a talented boy, he likes chess, who cares that he didn't analyse his game in the King's Indian? Yeah, he was fond of me.

'He had a big influence on me even though I only went to two and a half of these two-week sessions. I remember he played in Tilburg in 1981 and we had a training session immediately after that. He won this famous game against Kasparov, where he went with the king to b7 and c6, avoiding mate and easily repelling the attack. And then Nikitin said he got a letter from Kasparov, who had found a win. And Petrosian just laughed. And we said, tomorrow let's look at the analysis and you show us why it's wrong. But unfortunately I had to leave to some tournament. Till this day I regret that I didn't see it. Because it would have been amazing to see the brilliant analysis that Kasparov no doubt made against the natural talent of Petrosian to defend.

'But it wasn't only the World Championships that influenced me. There were others, too. In 1979, when I was 11, the Soviet championship was held in Minsk, where I lived, and it was won by Geller. There were a lot of young

stars. Kasparov was 18, Yusupov was 20. Young Dolmatov played. Yusupov came second, Kasparov third. A very strong tournament, but Geller, who was 54, smashed everybody and won convincingly. So when they tell me I am old now, I tell them I saw Geller win this tournament. Kortchnoi also influenced me a lot. In 1991 the Candidates' matches were held in Brussels, and the four players who lost were Kortchnoi and three young stars: Vishy, Ivanchuk and myself. We were sitting together at the closing ceremony. Viktor was sitting between me and Chuky. He said,

'And Petrosian would say, ah leave Boris alone, he hasn't done his homework, forgotten half a year, doesn't matter, who cares? He's a talented boy.'

guys, you are young, you have all your career ahead of you. I had the pinnacle of my career at 47, when I played in Baguio. So keep trying, you have chances, I know you can do it. Then he started pointing at some other players present. And you know Viktor, he said, look at this guy, he claims he will be World Champion, no chance. Look at this guy, he also thinks he will be world champion, no chance. But you guys, you have chances.'

Do you think about the future a lot?

'No, not really. The present is so interesting.'

Do you look at the years ahead in a philosophical manner or as a sportsman in the first place?

'Pretty philosophically. You never know what will happen. Do what you have to do and enjoy what there is.'

If you were to name key moments from your career, which ones would you start with?

'From a sporting point of view there was the win in the GMA tournament in 1989, because it gave me a lift to top level events. Also the last Candidates' cycle, which I won. In all modesty, it also changed people's perspective. Because a lot of players that I know, who are in their 30s, believed that their days were over. Now they know it's not like this and they stay in chess. Because of me. A lot of top players told me that they thought they had to retire and when they saw what I did they were motivated again and began to improve again. I don't want to name names, but all of them had some big success or a big push in rating. Whether it's good or bad is another thing. Some people complain that there are too many older players around. They believe this is bad for the young players, while I think it's fantastic. The game gets three times more interest, because among the spectators everyone can root for his own generation. And young players can see that they need not be under stress if one year doesn't go so well; that they can build up their career and improve day after day.'

If you look at the past few years, what have been the best moments, the ones that will stay with you forever?

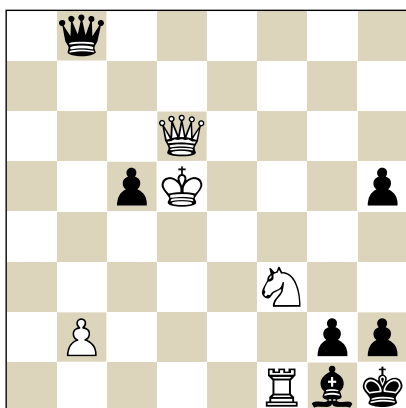
'When my children were born. Unfortunately, I was not there when my son was born, because I was playing in Monaco. But when my daughter was born, my first child, I was in the hospital with my wife, and it was an unbelievable feeling. Maybe because of this, but in any case after this my career had another boost. I see a clear connection. When I have great moments at home, with my wife, with my children, you think much more philosophically, so that a loss doesn't send you into depression. It probably helps me, seen in a general context.' ■



Jan Timman

Variations on famous themes

Some studies make such a deep impression on you that they stay etched in your memory forever. The following study is an example:



Gurgenzidze & Mitrofanov 1981

White to play and win

White must not capture the black queen, because then his rook will fall, with disastrous results. And if White plays his rook, Black has a check on b3. This is why he is forced to sacrifice his queen in such spectacular fashion.

1. ♖xh2+! ♜xh2

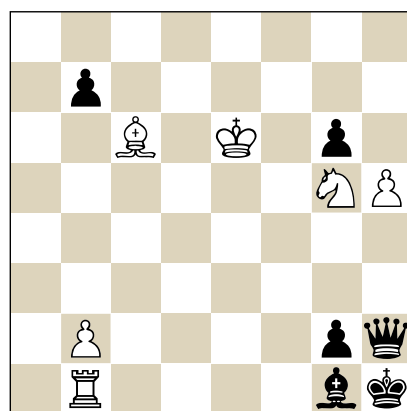
On which square should White put his rook? Superficially, it doesn't make much difference, but there is a trap. For the moment, Black can only make pawn moves. Once he has sacrificed his c-pawn and advanced his h-pawn to h3, he is ready for a queen sacrifice. Meanwhile, White finds it impossible to find cover for his king. Black will always be able to sacrifice his queen with check, after which he will push his h-pawn to h2, where White will have to take it to avoid stalemate. After that the black g-pawn will save the game.

2. ♜b1!!

About this mysterious rook move John Nunn observes in *Endgame Challenge*: 'The current position is one of those in which the traditional method of chess analysis – finding candidate moves and analysing them one by one – is completely useless. The reason is that this move and those following make no sense at all unless one has seen the final outcome of the plan.'

After the opening ceremony of the Tata Steel tournament I showed this study to Erwin I'Ami. He took his time solving it. Two days later he told me: '♜b1'. Finding the correct move had given him great satisfaction, as if he had uncovered a secret in chess. 2... h4 3. ♜c6! h3 4. ♜b7! c4 5. ♜a8! c3 6. bxc3 ♜b8+ 7. ♜xb8. This was the idea. Now 7...h2 will be met by the winning 8. ♜h8.

Later, Pal Benko reworked the study as follows:



Benko 1989

(after Gurgenzidze & Mitrofanov 1981)

White to play and win

White must play his knight to f3 in order to keep the black queen on h2 prisoner.

1. ♜f3 gxh5 2. ♜d5!

If White plays his bishop, Black will check on h3 and then take on f3, so White sacrifices his bishop to prevent a queen check.

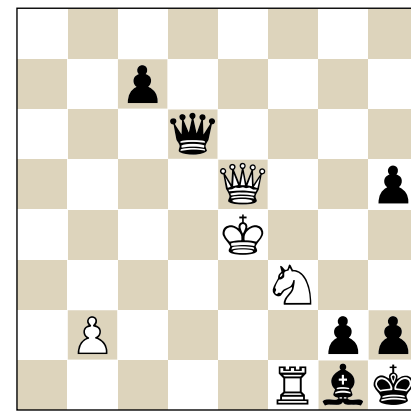
2...bxc6+ 3. ♜e4 c5

Forced. After 3...h4 4.b4! c5 5.b5 White would get a decisive passed pawn.

4. ♜d5!

And after this everything goes exactly as in Gurgenzidze and Mitrofanov.

This version is certainly not better than the original. The white bishop sacrifice is passive, meaning that the bishop is already on the square where it will be captured. In addition, the queen sacrifice and the mysterious rook move have disappeared. Granted, the king march has been extended, but this can also be achieved without removing the queen sac and the mysterious rook move.



Timman 2013

(after Gurgenzidze & Mitrofanov 1981)

White to play and win

Now 1. ♜c1 is insufficient in view of 1... ♜g6+ 2. ♜f5 ♜e8+!, and White cannot win.

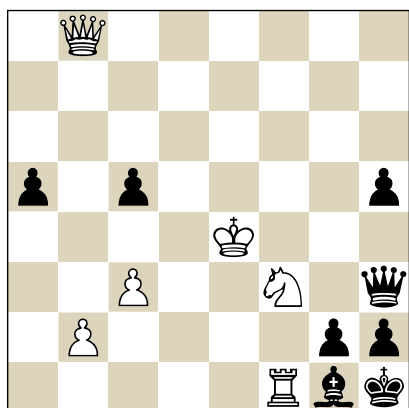
1. ♖xh2+! ♜xh2 2. ♜b1!! c5

Forced, as in Benko's version. After 2... h4 3.b4 would win.

3. ♔d5!

And now we're back to the familiar position.

The study can be worked out even further.



Timman 2013

(after Gurgenzidze & Mitrofanov 1981)
White to play and win

The queens are placed slightly differently to ensure that the queen sac is forced.

1. ♖xh2+!

After 1. ♜d1, ♜e6+ Black will be able to hold.

1... ♜xh2 2. ♜b1!! c4!

The best defence. Black enlarges his bishop's elbowroom in anticipation of the situation that will arise later. After other pawn moves White would play 3.c4 himself, which would eventually yield him a passed a-pawn (after Black is forced to push his a-pawn to a3).

3. ♔d5!

The king marches towards the traditional top left-hand corner of the board.

3... h4 4. ♔c6! h3 5. ♔b7! a4 6. ♔a8! a3 7. bxa3 ♜b8+ 8. ♜xb8

So far everything is clear. After 8... h2 White has the winning 9. ♜h8, but Black has an incredible resource up his sleeve.

8... ♔d4!

Mainly intended to control square h8. Now 9.cxd4 would be met by 9... h2 after all, and after 10. ♜h8 g1 ♜ 11. ♜xg1 ♜xg1 12.d5 c3 the black c-pawn would save the day. White has

to act very carefully to secure the win.

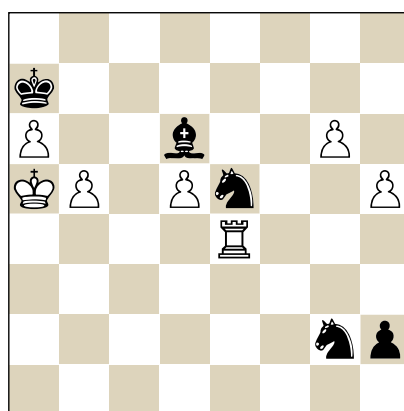
9. ♜d8!

Attacking the bishop with a third piece.

9... h2 10. ♜xd4 g1 ♜ 11. ♜xg1 hxg1 ♜ 12. ♜h4+ ♔g2 13. ♜g4+

The point of the ninth move. White wins.

Mitrofanov has made an even more famous study:



Mitrofanov 1967

White to play and win

In the original version, the black knight was on f3 instead of g2. But then White is unable to win, as witness the variation 1.b6+ ♔a8 2. ♜e1 ♜c4+! 3. ♔b5 ♜xb6 4.g7 ♔a7 5. ♔c6, and now Black has the surprising defence 5... ♔e7!, threatening 6... ♜d4+ 7. ♔c7 ♜b5+, with perpetual check. And after 6. ♜xe7+ ♔xa6 there is no win for White either.

Mitrofanov must have been very disappointed about this. In *Deceptive simplicity*, which he co-wrote with Fyodorov, he presents the study without the white rook and the black knight on e1, which eliminates the rook sacrifice. The drawback of that version is that the black knight doesn't play any part in the main line. This is why I will give you the same version as Nunn does in *Endgame Challenge*.

1.b6+ ♔a8 2. ♜e1!

In these circumstances the rook sac does work. Black has to take, since after 2... ♜c4+ 3. ♔b5 ♜xb6, 4.g7 is winning after all.

2... ♜xe1 3.g7 h1 ♜ 4.g8 ♜+ ♔b8 5.a7

The point of the rook sacrifice has be-

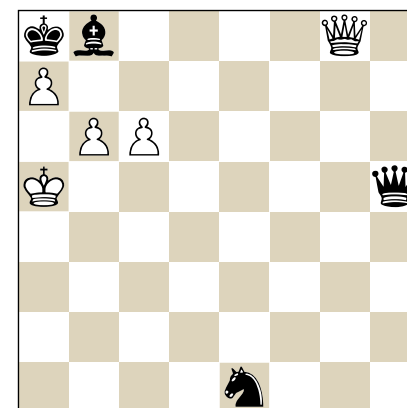
come clear. The first rank is inaccessible to the queen. There is only one check left.

5... ♜c6+

The only way to prevent immediate mate.

6.dxc6 ♜xh5+

Now there follows one of the most famous moves in chess history.



7. ♜g5!!

This queen sacrifice has entered history as 'Mitrofanov's deflection'. The black queen is driven to a square from where it cannot threaten the white king.

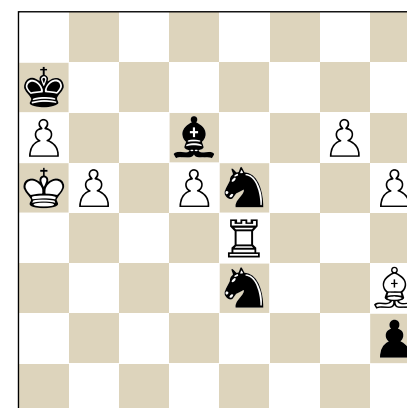
7... ♜xg5+ 8. ♔a6

There are no more checks.

8... ♔xa7 9.c7

An incredible situation. Despite his enormous material superiority, Black is unable to prevent mate.

Besides a rook sacrifice, it is also possible to add a bishop sacrifice to the study.



Timman 2013

(after Mitrofanov 1967)
White to play and win

White again starts with the necessary check.

1.b6+ ♔a8 2. ♔g2!



Jan Timman

A bishop sacrifice to prepare for the rook sacrifice!

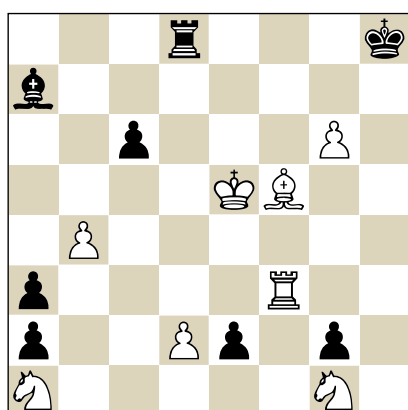
2...♖xg2 3.♔e1! ♜xe1 4.g7

And now everything is clear.

A bishop sacrifice, followed by a rook sacrifice with the intention to block the back rank: Mitrofanov would have been thrilled.

In New In Chess 2012/4 I published a study in honour of Yochanan Afek's 60th birthday, but afterwards I was not really happy with it. The study had a more or less open ending. Although the final position was in dynamic balance, there was no forcible method to show that it was really a draw. For this reason I had added a nice stalemate ending to it, but that was not forced either. These things don't really belong in a study.

For that reason I decided to turn the tables and make it into a 'White to win' study.



Timman 2013

White to play and win
For Yochanan Afek

Black has dangerous passed pawns, so White will have to go on the attack.

1.♖f6

Insufficient for the win was 1.♔h3+ ♜g7 2.♔h7+ ♜f8 3.♜xe2 in view of 3...♙d4+! 4.♜xd4 g1♖ 5.♔h8+ ♜g7 6.♔xd8 ♖xa1 7.♔d7+ ♜h6 8.g7 ♖e1+, and the sharp battle will eventually end in a draw.

1...♔f8+

After 1...♙d4+ 2.♖f7 Black would have no decent check left.

2.♖e7 e1♖+

The alternative was 2...♖g7, when White would win prosaically with 3.

♜xe2 g1♖ 4.♜xg1 ♙xg1 5.♜c2 ♙d4 6.♙d7!, eventually leading to a decisive material plus.

3.♖xf8 ♙c5+

Black decides to go for stalemate.

4.bxc5 ♖g3! 5.♔f4! ♖g4!

And again I raise the subject of Mitrofanov. Together with Kotov he has made two magnificent studies in which the chase of queen and rook is the main theme (for those studies, see my book *The Art of the Endgame*). Here the chase is cut short, because White has an ingenious way to remove the stalemate.

6.♜c2 a1♖ 7.d4!!

Certainly not 7.♜xa1, in view of 7...a2, and the stalemate is in the picture again. By advancing the d-pawn White closes the long diagonal, depriving Black of a check on g7. But Black, with his two queens, will now create counterplay in a different way.

7...♖f1

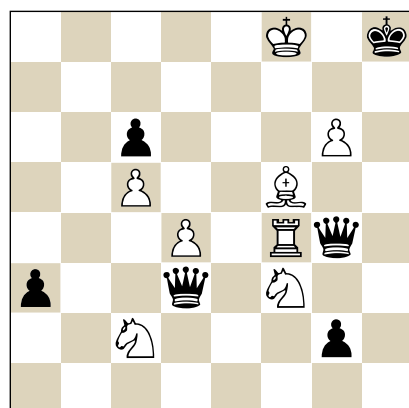
There now follows a fascinating battle between two queens and a rook and three minor pieces.

8.♜f3!

The other knight is deployed as well. After 8...♖fxf3 the simple 9.♔xf3 decides. But Black has another trump up his sleeve.

8...♖d3!

The battle focuses on gaining control of square f5, where the white bishop will be stationed immovably during the entire proceedings.



9.♜e3!!

The high point of the study. White gives the bishop extra cover. After other moves he would even lose.

9...g1♖

A third black queen appears on the board.

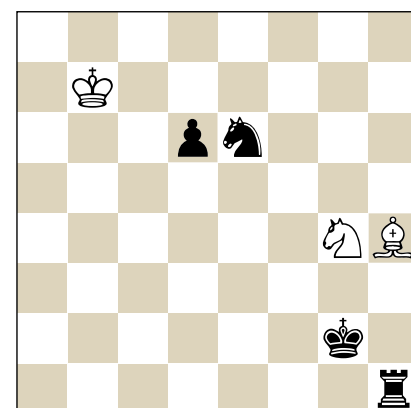
10.♜xg4 ♖xg4 11.♜e5

11.♜g5 is good as well. The black queens are powerless against the upcoming mate.

11...♖dxf5+ 12.♔xf5 ♖xf5+ 13.♜f7+

And wins.

One last thing: The study tournament to honour my 60th birthday (see New In Chess 2013/1) contained an entry that turns out to be almost entirely anticipated. It was the fifth honourable mention, for Yury Bazlov. Harold van der Heijden had missed the following study in his original anticipation report. It was only much later that he happened to come across it.



Kirillov & Udartsev 1992

White to play and draw

After one move from both sides Bazlov's study has exactly the same position. White has to attack the d-pawn.

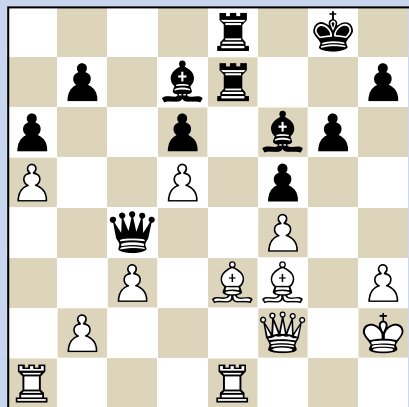
1.♙e7 ♔h7 2.♖c6, and now it's a draw after both 2...♔xe7 3.♖xd6 ♔g7 4.♜e3+ ♖f2 5.♜f5 ♔g6 6.♜e7 and 2...♜d4+ 3.♖xd6 ♜f5+ 4.♖e6 ♜xe7 5.♜f6 ♔g7 6.♜e8.

Bazlov did not know this study, of course. The man from Vladivostok is known for all kinds of brilliant finds in the area of studies. This will simply have to be regarded as a slight mishap. The removal of Bazlov's study has no further consequences for the tournament. Four honourable mentions remain, together with four commendations. ■

Beware: Brilliancy!

Oversights are part of the practice of each and every one of us. A great majority of them bear no special interest beyond the obvious lesson to avoid repeating them. All six positions below could be handled a lot better. In all of them forks play a role.

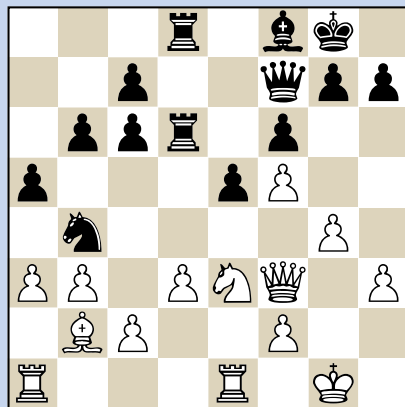
★★★★★



1. Black to play

Black went for bishop exchanges with **27...♗h4** and following **28.♙xh4 ♖xe3 29.♖xe3 ♗xe3 30.♗g2 ♔g7** he obtained a slight edge but eventually lost. Have you got a better idea?

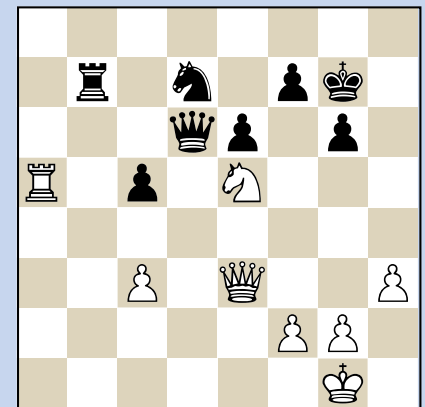
★★★★★



2. Black to play

As might be expected, the attacked knight retreated to the centre by **27...♞d5** allowing White to consolidate and later on cash in the whole point. Any other suggestions?

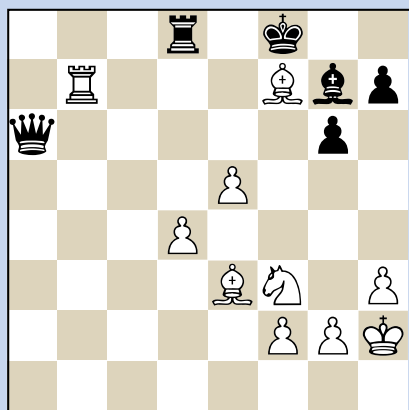
★★★★★



3. White to play

In this seemingly harmless position White continued **33.f4?** enabling the black heavy guns some dangerous initiative along the back rank. Could he do better than that?

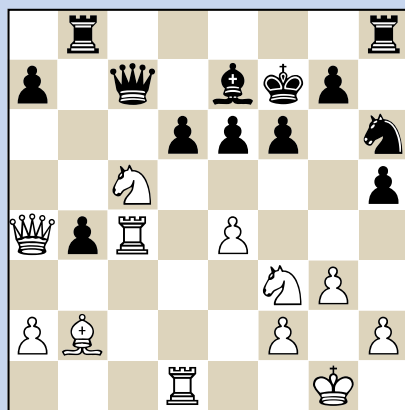
★★★★★



4. White to play

White played here the most natural **31. ♖c7** and the game ended in a draw some 30 moves later. Could you improve on that?

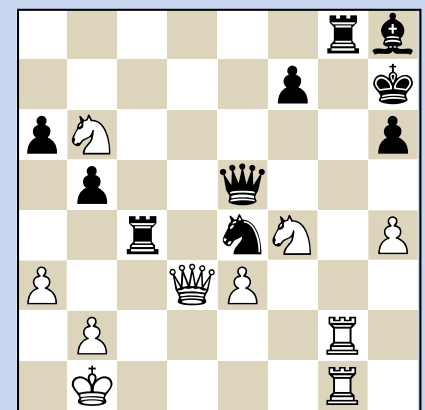
★★★★★



5. White to play

White is about to lose his piece advantage, and trying to make the best out of it. He continued **24.e5** but failed to get much following **24...dxc5 25.♖d7 ♗b6 26.exf6 gxf6**. What did he miss?

★★★★★



6. White to play

In severe time-trouble Black just tried to hold with **37...♖xg2 38.♖xg2 ♖c7??** But had to throw in the towel in view of the surprising **39.♞d7! ♗e7 40.♞e6!** In fact he could instead turn the tables with a huge surprise of his own.

The number of stars roughly indicates their estimated level of difficulty: 1 is easiest and 5 most difficult. **Solutions on page 65**



Dressed to Kill

I

first set my eyes upon Louis, son of Baron Eugene Amable Adolphus Edward de Cadier de Veauce, at the British Chess Championship in Morecambe 1975. It was not his chess prowess that struck me, although a second place finish with Tony Miles, Max Fuller and Simon Webb indicated at least a modicum of talent, and nor was it his aristocratic bearing – which was conspicuous by its absence – rather it was the way he constantly fondled his leg, during play, through a large hole in his jeans. This eccentric young man who, if rumours are to be believed, subsisted upon a diet entirely of toast and chocolate, soon vanished from the chess scene. Perhaps it was just as well, because one wonders how he would have coped in the modern era of forbidding dress codes. In sharp contrast to the dignified, Victorian elegance of the 19th century, sartorial standards among the chess elite in England were decidedly lax during the 1970s. Your average long-haired Grandmaster, clad in denim, more closely resembled a rock fan at a Led Zeppelin concert at Knebworth than an intellectual or an international sporting ambassador. In some ways this was commendably liberal. One of the great perks of a bohemian

life is to be unfettered by societal norms. It was particularly appealing to those, like me, who bitterly resented, for years on end, the irksome requirement to wear school uniforms with the obligatory jacket and tie. My Dad often stressed the importance of dressing smartly – not that I cared to listen at the time. After some years, however, comes a deeply worrying moment during a man's life, when he suddenly realises he is becoming like his father. Imperceptibly, from thinking him a tiresome old fuddy-duddy, I eventually found myself in agreement on this point. Nowadays I confine sartorial 'rebellion' to discreetly wearing ties in Tehran. In the West it is a sign of conformity, but in Iran, where government ministers are banned from wearing them, it gives me an inner feeling of naughty pleasure. However, in the past I have openly courted controversy in matters of clothing: at the Biel Interzonal in 1985 I famously ran foul of the FIDE fashion-fascists by appearing for my game against Gyula Sax in shorts (provoking obvious puns with my surname) and a vest. I will be the first to acknowledge that it was more than a tad undignified, but it was a deliberate protest at having to cope with sweltering conditions (over 30°C) for hours on end, in a very important event, without air-conditioning. Nowadays I would express my displeasure at sub-standard conditions a little more subtly, because I believe that sponsors have the right to expect professionals to present the game positively. Probably the GMA World Cup of the

late 1980s was a watershed moment: when you are provided excellent hotels, treated well and remunerated bountifully, dressing smartly seems like the least you can do in return. Bobby Fischer seems to have grasped this concept at a very early stage. He went overnight from a callow youth in sweaters and slacks, to a superstar in English-tailored, bespoke suits – allegedly at the instigation of Miguel Najdorf. Garry Kasparov similarly abandoned the beloved leather jackets of his teens en route to becoming World Champion. Not only do you generally get paid better when you dress well, but you are accorded greater respect too...

The European Chess Union caused great mirth and countless headlines all around the world when it introduced its dress code in 2012. A few women, in particular, were affronted when short skirts and dresses were proscribed and at the admonition that no more than two buttons on the chest could be left undone. Even the ECU General Secretary, Sava Stoislavljevic, who was left to halfheartedly defend this piece of legislation, admitted that some girls look very pretty when showing a bit of leg. One outraged colleague of mine swore that she would wear a neatly buttoned transparent chiffon blouse, without a bra, as a snub. Either she has had second thoughts or her husband has dissuaded her, as this particular 'threat' so far has yet to be carried out. Unsurprisingly, despite some initial indignation, no boycott has material-

ized and jumping on the ECU bandwagon FIDE Vice-President Beatriz Marinello has now proposed similar guidelines for FIDE events. Curiously though, she included the following as being not acceptable for women players: 'clothes made of see-through materials or clothes that expose areas of the body usually covered in the location where the event is taking place', which presumably means that, depending on the venue, anything goes...

Laughable as some details may appear, the general concept behind the raft of new regulations is not completely ridiculous. Image is important: indeed it is vital to securing lasting sponsorship. To be sure, there is a strong sense among players that officialdom simply imposes new obligations upon them as a means of control and masking their own ineptitude. In recent years we have seen a strong push in other areas towards Sofia Rules (good idea) and Bilbao Rules (bad idea). The obvious impetus behind these moves is an urge from on high to demonstrate that any malaise in the world of chess is entirely the fault of the players. While the motives for these initiatives are not always benign, it does not necessarily imply that the ideas are of themselves also wrong. Take, for example, headgear: in an age where computer cheating is rife, it is astonishing that people are still allowed to don all manner of hats, caps and headscarves. If the new proposals are passed, in future only the professedly religious will be able to conceal their listening devices undetected. And while I would never for a minute accuse the charming Costa Rican Grandmaster Alejandro Ramirez of dishonesty, he has been witnessed proudly sporting some hideous animal on his head that is not only an insult to chess, but an aesthetic crime against humanity. Quite frankly, the sooner that sort of thing is banned, the better.

Unlike the ECU, the new FIDE proposals have sensibly avoided the stipulation that clothes should be 'free of body odour'. One imagines this is less a green-light for participants to stink like a rancid camembert than an acknowledgment that policing it would be highly arbi-

'Bobby Fischer seems to have grasped this concept at a very early stage. He went overnight from a callow youth in sweaters and slacks, to a superstar in English-tailored, bespoke suits – allegedly at the instigation of Miguel Najdorf.'

trary. Where would one draw the line? Compulsory showers? Mandatory changes of underwear? One could imagine a whole new bureaucracy created to enforce such measures. Or perhaps the appeals committee could double up, as they rarely have anything to do anyway. On a related matter, the 12th World Champion used to be notorious for his aversion to shampoo (he has improved greatly since his semi-retirement). At times his hair was so greasy you could almost fry chips

on it. If you are going to begin dictating intimate matters of personal appearance, why not include that? Penalties for infringement could include the docking of a few Elo points, which would ensure compliance more effectively than any fine.

Thankfully, even if approved by the General Assembly, none of this will apply, as yet, to the substantial corpus of private tournaments – although, in this authoritarian age where judicial permission hesitantly granted to wiretap the odd suspected terrorist quickly becomes blanket licence to examine the e-mails and bank accounts of everyone everywhere, perhaps it will not be long before the tentacles of regulation encroach into that domain as well.

My final thought on the subject of apparel: one thing I am very surprised not to have seen so far, despite the best efforts of Marcel Duchamp and latterly Jennifer Shahade, is a nude chess tournament. Such a profane gimmick surely has great marketing potential, if organised properly. Chess, after all, is revered as the ultimate mind sport and therefore it would provide a delightfully wicked incongruity between the esoteric workings of the synapses and the utter brainlessness of displays of exposed flesh. For the sake of balance, I would suggest a mixed event, using the Scheveningen system. It could be held in Cap d'Agde or perhaps on a Greek beach, conveniently near the FIDE headquarters. Of course, I am far too tactful to suggest potential names, but I will make an exception on this occasion and suggest one – Bulgarian superstar, Borislav Ivanov. With his capacious lust for publicity, the tournament should be right up his street and besides, with its fully open nature, it will give him an excellent opportunity to prove his multitude of detractors, who are convinced of his guilt as a shabby, little, computer-assisted cheat, wrong. ■



A letter and a word all by himself

The life and times of Igor Ivanov (1947-2005)

Soviet chess player Igor Ivanov embarked on his fateful trip to Cuba in 1980 with Yuri Razuvaev, who described it: 'Igor didn't ignore the Cuban rum and when he was drunk he said that he planned to stay in Newfoundland, in Canada, on the way back. One Cuban grandmaster took good note of all this, called the Soviet embassy and told them about Ivanov's plans. Fortunately for Igor it was a Friday, the end of the working day, and everyone had rushed home and to the beach. The Cuban do-gooder was advised to call back on Monday. He probably decided not to make excessive effort. The tournament ended, I flew back to Moscow, and Igor stayed on for one more tournament...'



Genna Sosonko

Igor Ivanov didn't speak any foreign languages. The German grandmaster Helmut Pfleger, who also played in Cuba, wrote a note for him in English and French. Ivanov was flying to Moscow with some basketball players, and the person who was accompanying them had already started looking at

Igor somewhat suspiciously at the airport in Havana. Igor got off the plane in Newfoundland, but the KGB man continued following him in the airport there too.

There were no police anywhere. Ivanov went up to the second floor, walked into the Duty Free, approached

the woman who was standing behind the counter and handed her his scrap of paper. She read the note, went off somewhere and came back with two policemen. The KGB man realized that something had gone wrong and tried to grab Igor, but the police stopped him.

At the police office Igor was asked three questions. The first was whether he was under the influence of any narcotic substances. The second was whether his decision was final and irrevocable. The third was whether he wanted to collect his luggage. When Igor came out of the police office carrying his shabby little suitcase, the KGB man was still raging from outside, shouting in a mixture of Russian and English that anyone who wanted to defect to Canada was a criminal.

The police put Igor into a car and drove him to a hotel, went up to the room with him, and drove off, leaving him on his own, saying that they would be back the next morning. Igor recalled that he immediately locked the door as securely as possible, but he couldn't sleep: all kinds of horrors were haunting him – they would kidnap him and forcibly take him to Moscow.

In the morning Ivanov was driven to another hotel and put in the same room as some KGB guy who had also defected to Canada about 10 days earlier. They brought him there, gave him some pocket change to buy food and... forgot him. A week passed, another one. The KGB man was constantly scribbling some kind of memoirs or reports, and Igor was frustrated by his inactivity, drinking cheap red wine and singing Russian romances, of which he knew an inordinate number.

Once, unable to control himself, the KGB man sharply called him to order. Igor, as was usual for him, gave him a piece of his mind. 'You know, I'm a karate expert!' his defector colleague shot back, rounding on Ivanov. He fled outside and ran away just as he was, only in his underwear. Having saved himself from being beaten

up, Igor found himself in a shop. The people there were outraged and asked the shop assistants to call the police. 'That's exactly what I need!' the imposing, almost naked man said in broken French. They remembered Ivanov and sent him to Montreal. From that moment on he himself became the master of his own fate.



Before flying to Cuba for his first tournament abroad Ivanov was given instructions by the head of Soviet chess. Knowing that he was seeing him for the last time, Igor listened to his admonitions about how a Soviet person should behave abroad, what to watch out for, whom to talk to if something happened... 'And why are you smiling at that?' the unsuspecting Viktor Davidovich Baturinsky asked. 'I always smile,' Igor replied, enjoying the fun of his thoughts.

He had the most common surname in Russia. The name that 'holds Russia together'. When Igor defected to Canada, Edward Stein, a scholar, long-time dissident and Kortchnoi's press agent, responded with a long article in the American *Novoe Russkoe Slovo*. 'Kortchnoi, fine,' Stein wrote, 'Alburt, fine, but when Ivanovs start running away from Russia...'

Igor Vasilievich Ivanov was born in Leningrad on January 8, 1947. His mother taught her child chess when he was five years old. Within a short time the boy started beating her. At the same time he learnt to read, and his first book was a chess textbook. He had a strong memory and remembered the games he'd played even at a very young age. At eight he started going to the Pioneers' Palace and was considered one of the most promising children. He also studied music, and his mother dreamed that her Igorek would become a professional pianist.

At 14 he was left an orphan. The teenager was housed in a boarding school. He continued studying chess and music. At the boarding school they saw that they had a special case

on their hands and even gave him his own room – a rarity. When he finished school he would have entered the mathematics faculty, but he was too lazy to go to lectures. He soon left the university, choosing the path of a chess professional.

He got a room in a communal flat on Vasilievsky Island in Leningrad. Those who were there remember it: a bed, a wardrobe, a table, a couple of chairs – that was the entire simple setup. And books. At that time Igor was studying chess very intensively and reading, reading, reading. Ivanov wasn't at all interested in cards – the favourite occupation of chess players in those days. He mainly read thick volumes of Russian classics: Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Leskov, Chekhov...

He also read during games. Although I don't think that the rules state you are allowed to read during a game: who can know what kind of books you are reading? The concept of cheating in the modern sense of the word didn't exist in those vegetarian times, and it was only later that people were noticed heading for the stalls with chess literature lying on the counter in the foyers of open tournaments, or immersed in studying variations, positions from which for some reason happened to be set up on their boards... But Igor would go off to the side somewhere, so that his board was in his field of vision, and sit somewhere on a window-sill absorbed in his reading, looking up from time to time to see if his opponent had made his move.

He openly disliked the Soviet lifestyle and dreamed of somehow leaving the country. He went to Central Asia, to Tajikistan. Then he moved to Uzbekistan and lived in a hostel in Tashkent. Although he won the championship of the republic and played for Uzbekistan on first board, he still didn't manage to get a flat. But he wasn't depressed.

When on our first meeting outside Russia I asked him why he had

defected, he thought for a while and then said: ‘You know what was good about living in Uzbekistan? You could listen to anything there almost without interference. Radio Liberty, Deutsche Welle, Voice of America, the BBC... I knew all the frequencies by heart. Can you imagine – you tune the receiver and the familiar call signs are already on: “Liberty speak-

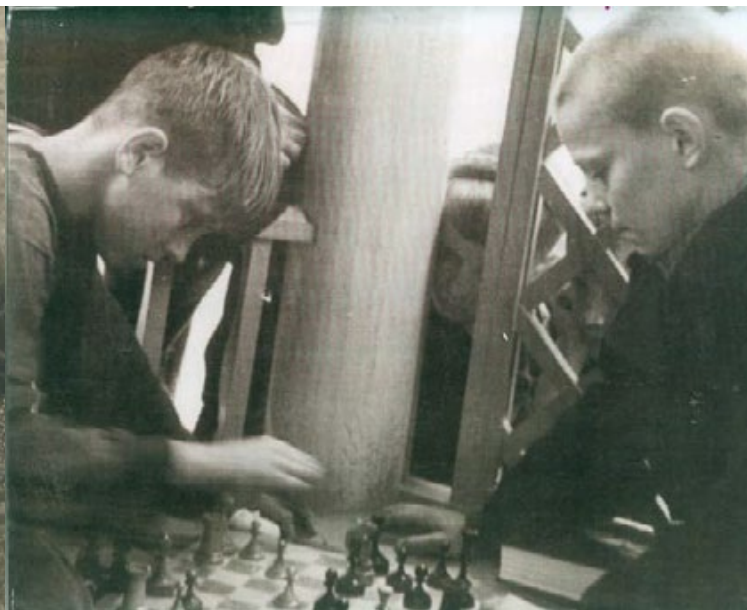
by Anatoly Karpov was a sensation.

By that time Igor had moved to Moscow and married a Jewish woman, but his wife’s parents categorically opposed their daughter’s departure. In those days, apart from resoluteness, you could never know how such an attempt would end – a person of any age who planned to emigrate from the country required a pile of

aback, “but I’ve already told everyone.”’

‘It’s surprising, but no one reported his intentions. I can’t give any other explanation, except that Igor’s campaign consisted of similar drinking sessions taking place around the chess pavilions in Sokolniki and Gorky Park,’ Boris Gulko thinks today. ‘I’m not sure that Igor would have man-

His mother taught him to play chess and it was love at first sight. The photo of young Igor Ivanov in sailor suit is believed to have been taken in the spring of 1953 when he was five years old. The other photo, where he watches a friend make a move, was taken four years later.



ing! Listen to the latest edition of the news – today Academic Sakharov...” Then you go outside and walk around as if you’re on a drug.’

He travelled around the towns and villages of the enormous country which once occupied one-sixth of the Earth. Vladivostok, Yaroslavl, Ashkhabad, Tashkent again: this was the list of cities where he won tournaments. I probably left something out too. In Daugavpils in 1978 he shared first place in a selection tournament, finishing second by coefficient. But there was no shame in saying the name of the person who went forward to the next round: Garry Kasparov.

In his book *The Test of Time* Kasparov analyses his game against Igor Ivanov from that tournament in detail. The advantage switched from side to side, and it eventually ended in a draw.

He became even more famous when he beat the then world champion at the Spartakiad of Peoples of the USSR the following year. At the time any loss

every kind of document: references, notarized certificates, receipts. Parental permission was compulsory: otherwise the visa department wouldn’t even accept the documents for review. That’s how that attempt failed.

‘Even though Igor represented Uzbekistan, he had a room in a communal flat in Moscow somewhere near the Triumphal Square,’ Boris Gulko recalled. ‘I had already submitted my emigration documents and sometimes visited him to play blitz. We drank a bottle of the Hungarian red wine Bull’s Blood, which Igor loved, and chatted about everything under the sun. Once he said, “I drank a lot here recently with Antoshin [Vladimir Antoshin was the senior coach of the Soviet men’s team – G. S.], and he promised to send me to Cuba. So I’ll probably slip off on the way there.” “If you’ve decided that, then don’t tell anyone”, I remember I advised Igor. “There are snitches all over the place, they’ll report you in an instant.” “Er, yes,” Ivanov said, taken

aged his escape if he had had those conversations in a more upscale setting.’

■ ■ ■

In his new life, Canadian chess lay before him like a wasteland. This chess was very different from the kind that Igor Ivanov had played in the Soviet Union. Swiss tournaments! Seven games, nine, eleven. Almost always without rest days. Sometimes even two games a day, or occasionally three. Playing on the nerves, weekends, where losing even one point is fatal, and a single draw may spoil outright first place. Open tournaments, where the final result depends on the last game to an immeasurably larger extent than in the tournaments Igor was used to. They say that in his first Swiss tournament, having carefully equalized as Black, Ivanov offered a draw to someone with a rating of about 1800. He never did that again.

In the period 1980-97 Igor Ivanov

won nine of the Grand Prix established by the U.S. Chess Federation. Victory in each tournament brought him not only a prize, even if it wasn't very big, but also so-called 'chicken points': the first sponsor of the Grand Prix was the company Church's Chicken. The winner of the series received \$10,000 at the end of the year.

Igor travelled all over the whole of the enormous country, playing virtu-

country three more times (1985-87), not to mention the open championships. At Edmonton (1985) the open and closed championships of Canada were held simultaneously in the same building. Ivanov played in both tournaments. After making a move in the open, Igor went to the other hall. They say that late at night he rarely denied himself the pleasure of also playing on the grand piano that stood in

work and red tape. He smiled: 'Let it be. After all, I'm the strongest master in the world!' They awarded him the grandmaster title only in 2005, the year that he died, for his combined successes.

Ivanov's constant opponent in those years was Canadian grandmaster Kevin Spraggett: 'At the end of the summer of 1980 Igor finally settled in Montreal and started winning virtually all the tournaments in which he took part. Very soon Igor won a reputation as the best tournament player in North America. He beat all the American grandmasters at that time.

'Although after about 1983 he didn't manage to demonstrate his former results, in the short period 1981-82 Igor Ivanov was a top player! One of the best I've ever encountered at the board, I'm not afraid to include him in the same group as Spassky, Tal, Shirov, Gelfand and Kortchnoi.'

There's no doubt about it: this is strongly put! In order to agree with Kevin we have to look more closely at Ivanov's games from that period. But we won't forget – this evaluation doesn't come from a journalist or a member of the Igor Ivanov fan club, but from a grandmaster who played in Candidates' matches against the strongest in the world in those years. And not without success.

■ ■ ■

Among the players who left the Soviet Union in the seventies and eighties of the last century a sharp ascent often occurred, and sometimes a flash: winning the title of international master, which was much more prestigious in those days, and then even grandmaster. Then a gradual, or often a fast fading.

The reasons are obvious: resting on their laurels, reducing their demands on themselves, and their inability to work constantly at the new level with an even more intensive schedule. Often the quick decline was caused by the impossibility of resisting the temptations of the West, the easy availabil-



'You know what was good about living in Uzbekistan? You could listen to anything there almost without interference. Radio Liberty, Deutsche Welle, Voice of America, the BBC... I knew all the frequencies by heart.'

ally every week. Once, after spending almost three days on a bus from Los Angeles to the east coast, he stopped in a small town. The bus didn't go any further. He asked if it was far to his destination. 'About 20 minutes on that road.' Igor walked for five hours and only got to the tournament just before morning. No one would have imagined that he planned to cover that distance on foot. Despite his sleepless night he scored five out of five and won his next 10 'chicken points'.

In 1981 he won the Canadian Championship, which was also a zonal tournament, went on to the Interzonal and became an international master. He won the championship of the

the room between the two halls. He became Canadian champion in both categories...

At the 1982 Olympiad in Lucerne he beat Timman and Miles on first board, who were considered the best grandmasters in the West at the time. Robert Byrne dedicated a complimentary column to him in the *New York Times*. He also played superbly that year at the Interzonal in Toluca, sharing fourth place with Lev Polugaevsky, Artur Yusupov and Yasser Seirawan, only half a point behind Boris Spassky. His result was 7½ out of 13, and the grandmaster norm was 7.8. He simply didn't attach much importance to the norms he achieved after that, and didn't want to deal with the paper-

ity of so much that had been inaccessible in their former lives. In Igor Ivanov's case, along with these reasons we should add the lifestyle that he led: it's difficult to call him anything other than self-destructive.

As well as his exhausting, debilitating trips across the United States and Canada, and frequent playing in tournaments whose level was much lower than his own, the issue

nation on some kind of theoretical basis, much less to moralize. Maybe it was just in his DNA.

When Igor drank he became talkative and genial, and laughed more than usual, but he far from always controlled himself. Once he was playing in Thailand. He went into a nightclub in Bangkok. Music, girls. 'Will you buy me champagne, sir?' 'And me?' 'And me?' He went home and

all I'll be too nervous and won't be able to play. But! If I drink too much, I'll be drunk, and that's bad too. So the dosage is important here.' With those words Igor took another gulp from the bottle, which was wrapped in brown paper. Browne played the game very vigorously, and Ivanov had to 'calm his nerves' frequently in the foyer. When his position had become hopeless, Igor was already completely

Igor Ivanov loved to read during games. Lounging on a deckchair he is absorbed in the Russian edition of Viktor Kortchnoi's Anti-Chess.



was Igor's addiction to alcohol. 'How strong was Igor Ivanov in actual fact?' Kevin Spraggett asks. 'To give the correct answer to that question we have to acknowledge that Igor had serious problems with alcohol; sometimes at the end of the evening you could find him under the table in some local club... As a consequence, after a few years of living in the West his chess strength declined.'

Merrymaking in Russian means drinking, and of course it's possible to reference the traditions of the country in which Ivanov was born and where he lived for the majority of his life. We can recall his difficult childhood, having to grow up early. We can talk about his ability to relax, which isn't that uncommon in professional chess. I don't want to come up with an expla-

the bill was already waiting for him: he had signed cheques for \$1,800 in the club. 'Idiot! Cretin!' Igor swore at himself. 'That's what happens to a drunken idiot!' He took an oath: 'I won't let a drop pass my lips for a week!' He held out for two days...

'Ivanov shared first place before the last round of the very strong New York Open,' Lev Alburt recalls. 'A win against Walter Browne would have given him first prize. And it wasn't small: \$18,000. A draw – at a rough estimate – about \$5,000, but a loss... I arrived to play about 10 minutes before the start and saw Igor swigging something from a bottle. The bottle clearly wasn't for a soft drink, and Igor didn't even hide that.'

'You understand, Lev,' he explained. 'I have to get myself into playing condition. If I don't drink anything at

sozzled and explained to Alburt in a slurred voice that he hadn't managed to take the correct dosage.'

The 1989 United States Championships were held in Los Angeles. The participants lived and played in the same hotel. In the rest room there was no shortage of beverages; besides soft drinks there was an array of wine bottles. The room was locked at night, but every player had a duplicate key to it. 'You wake up at night and you know that close by, one floor below you, there's wine. And it's free! Whether you want it or not, you go,' Igor complained.

Igor was late for a game against Roman Dzindzichashvili. He arrived in the tournament hall straight from the swimming pool, but already tipsy, as usual. He was only wearing swim-

ming trunks and a towel, which was wrapped around his wet head for some reason.

'I got a little held up here,' Igor announced in the doorway, 'but don't worry, I'm just coming.' He arrived in the hall a quarter of an hour later, triumphantly holding a thermos in front of him. After sitting down at the board, Igor greeted his opponent and, thinking he was talking in a whisper, loudly announced

Some people were already analysing their finished games when Igor Ivanov appeared in the players' room. Taking two glasses, like a real barman he filled them with red and white wine at the same time with both hands and drained one after the other. 'Now I'm good!' Igor exhaled, and went back to the tournament hall. His gait was unsteady: he had already carried out a similar procedure several times.



Taking two glasses, like a real barman he filled them with red and white wine at the same time with both hands and drained one after the other. 'Now I'm good!' Igor exhaled, and went back to the tournament hall.

to Alburt, who was playing on the next board, 'I've had a bit to drink, but I have pea soup in the thermos. It's hot! Believe me, it's the best way to restore yourself, so...' Ivanov was shushed from every direction. Another five minutes passed, and a terrible cry resounded through the hall. Abandoning their own games, everyone rushed to the table where Igor was sitting. It turned out that after he unscrewed the cap he started pouring the contents of the thermos into it. Unfortunately, Igor confused his own hand with the cap.

And a sketch from another championship. Ivanov's game against Seirawan was going on for a long time.

Dzindzi describes it: 'I'm sitting somewhere in a hotel with [Anatoly] Lein, analysing some position. Igor comes in, reeking of alcohol from yards away, and having trouble standing. We continue our analysis – yes, the position is lost. Here Igor butts into what we're doing: "What are you talking about, guys?" he says. "What do you mean, lost? Why lost? Have a look at the position with sober eyes!"'

■ ■ ■

In Montreal they speak French, and Igor significantly improved at the language he had learned at school in Leningrad. When, introducing

him to someone at the Olympiad in Lucerne, I said that Igor spoke a little French, he was quite offended and replied curtly: 'I don't speak a little French, I'm actually very good at it.' Often visiting the United States, and then moving there, Igor switched to English and spoke that language perfectly well too.

Finding himself outside the borders of the Soviet Union, he didn't change his habits: he continued reading during games, although the subject matter was different. I can see him during an open tournament in New York calmly adjusting his glasses and, while his opponent was thinking about his move, reading a book from the émigré publishing house Posev.

Sometimes he acted the fool, and it was often impossible to tell if he really meant what he was saying or if he was joking. Although he played with great concentration, he preserved his inner jocularly. Once he offered Gulko a draw. After making his move, his opponent replied that he wanted to play on. 'Such cruelty!' Igor pronounced with expression, smiling.

We were never particularly close. I was four years older than him: no small difference when you're young! In Petersburg we saw each other at tournaments, we talked, of course, but to say that we were close...

The distance was also preserved when Igor defected to the West. We saw each other at the Karpov-Kortchnoi match in Merano in 1981, at Olympiads, and we played in New York and California. Our relationship could probably best be defined by the Latin word 'amicé'. In ancient Rome this kind of relationship usually meant belonging to some specific public institute, guild or a collegiality. Doctors and lawyers in the West who don't see each other face-to-face even today sometimes write letters to each other starting with the word 'amicé' – colleague and associate.

■ ■ ■

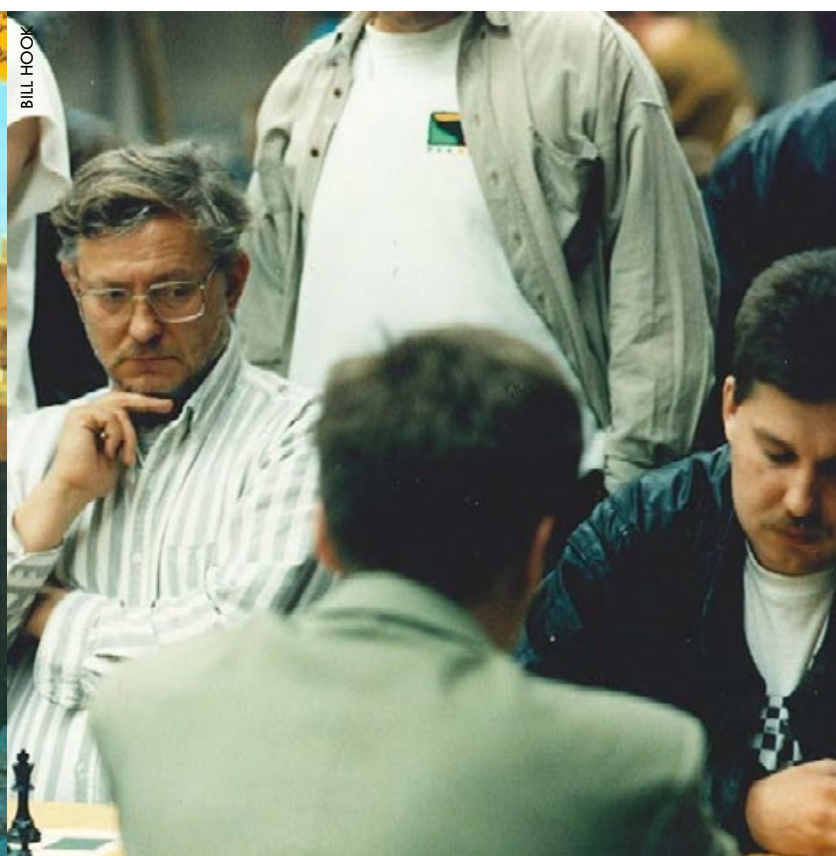
In the autumn of 1981 Igor Ivanov went to Italy. 'Ivanov assisted me in Merano during my second match against Karpov,' Victor Kortchnoi recalls. 'But we had worked together before that too. I had the idea to start playing the Dutch. No, not the Leningrad variation, absolutely not the Leningrad. The Stonewall! I played a whole match with Ivanov on that theme. He was very decent in that match, but, unfortunately, as in other

Belonging to the category known as one-offs, even against the backdrop of the fantastic variety of types in the Soviet period of Russian history Igor Ivanov stood out as extraordinary and unusual. Those who imagine a person as a social unit, a letter only becoming a word in amalgamation with others, would be disappointed: Igor was a letter and a word all by himself. He didn't change much in the West. 'A character! A personality!'

people broke off their relations with him, sometimes for a long time, or even forever.

He was far from the correctness of upright citizens, life with absolute taboos, and too often he knew no boundaries. Reckless, greedy for life, he wanted to try everything, experience everything, and apparently feared nothing. But some kind of animal instinct sensed a boundary that shouldn't be crossed. Boris Gulko

Although he was only an IM, he won nine of the Grand Prix established by the U.S. Chess Federation in the period 1980-97. Small wonder that 'peripatetic Igor Ivanov' appeared on the cover of Chess Life several times.



openings he kept trying to go his own way. I wanted to see how to play against the main lines.

'Some lady came to Merano with him, already rather mature, although Ivanov was only 34 then... In general his relationships with women were rather involved. You say that Baturinsky said two women who had had his children came to him when Ivanov had already left the Union? Yes, he didn't hide that himself either, he was even proud that the births happened within little more than a day... I think he left a wife and child in Leningrad too.'

We won't continue this topic, although it provides food for thought, of course, especially for Dr. Freud.

said the person who probably knew him better than anyone else, especially in his first years in Canada – Kevin Spraggett.

When he lived in the Soviet Union he was sent poison pen letters from one tournament after another. In the chess federation Igor Ivanov was considered a 'troublemaker'; in Canada he also came into conflict with bureaucrats. Truly, Ivanov didn't belong to the species that you can encounter always and everywhere, the species that is close to power under any regime, and especially was not one of those who become the favourites of the authorities. But he was no lamb – like everyone who drinks, he had mood swings, and

asked him once, 'Listen, Igor, have you ever tried drugs?' 'No, that – no.' 'How come?' He smiled: 'I'm afraid.'

He was a professional chess player his whole life and knew the unwritten laws and rules of that guild perfectly; rules that the public at large most often wouldn't even have guessed at. He knew that a draw could be concluded for mutual pleasure, that a chess game, like a football match or a fight on the mat, could be held according to the laws of wrestling, being a sport only in name. That sometimes a chess game is just one product in a huge bazaar where everything is being bought and sold.

He maintained relationships with his former compatriots, although in

the presence of officials they tried to look the other way, and sometimes didn't offer their hand during a game. At the Olympiad in Lucerne in 1982 he wore a T-shirt with 'Gulko' on it, to whom the authorities wouldn't give permission to emigrate. Obviously this angered the bureaucrats even more. Then again, sometimes he switched the T-shirt for another one with the slogan 'Chess players mate better!' I thought Igor didn't understand the double meaning of the expression, but when I started a

town where Igor lived with his wife Elizabeth, a teacher who had been retired for a long time. There was a big grand piano in the house and Igor sometimes performed for the public at the local cathedral. Chopin was one of his favourite composers, and he played his *Fantasie-Impromptu* Op. 66 especially often.

He gave chess lessons, and in the summer, like many American grandmasters, he went to a camp. He retained his passion for reading, but now he shared this passion with gar-

but he didn't live to experience real, relentless old age.

He received a harsh diagnosis in March 2005. Courses of chemotherapy began. In August he was still playing in the U.S. Open Championship in Arizona, and three weeks before he died he shared victory in the championship of the state where he'd lived his last years. Igor Vasilievich Ivanov died on November 17, 2005.

One of his friends, an American amateur player, recalls Igor phoning him



At a tournament in his home of St. George in southern Utah (two hours from Las Vegas) in August 2005, a few months before he passed away. Left to right are organizer and technical director Alan Crooks, John Donaldson, Igor Ivanov, David Vigorito, Emory Tate and Enrico Sevillano.

conversation about it, it became clear that he understood everything perfectly, although he may only have been talking about himself.

In 1991 he moved to Utah. He started playing less, but the school where Igor Ivanov taught children chess won the national championships twice. He even received congratulations from President Clinton. He laughed when he talked about this, but he was also proud of it.

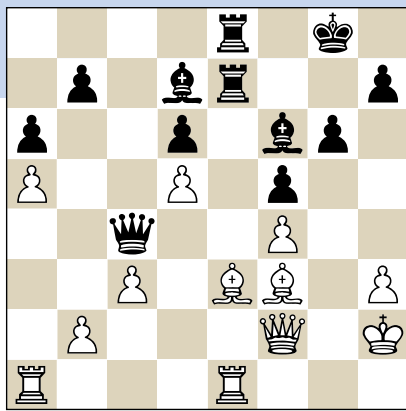
He spent his last years in a small town by the name of St. George. It's halfway between Salt Lake City and Las Vegas. Utah is the Mormon state, and their influence is also huge in the

dening and 'taking care of my two spoilt cats – Petrushka and Sasha'. But there were also days of idleness, the sister of the freedom he had chosen a quarter of a century previously. He reflected on what he might have managed to achieve if he had dedicated the time he spent on music to chess.

In his last years ailments started to manifest themselves in his alcohol-soaked organism. He treated these ailments in the way he knew best, and although the Mormon philosophy is negative about alcohol, they closed their eyes to Igor's weakness. His age approached 60, and here and there flashes of age were already showing,

and saying that he had cancer, inoperable cancer. 'I asked him if he'd heard the Monty Python song *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life*'. Igor replied that he didn't know the song, but would like to listen to it. When he called the next day, he said that he had particularly liked the words, "You know, you come from nothing – you're going back to nothing. What have you lost? Nothing!" And he laughed his familiar infectious laugh. That's how I always remembered Igor Ivanov, laughing and enjoying life, staring death right in the face. Although he knew he didn't have long to live, Igor's spirit was strong to the end. ■

Beware: Brilliancy! Solutions of page 53

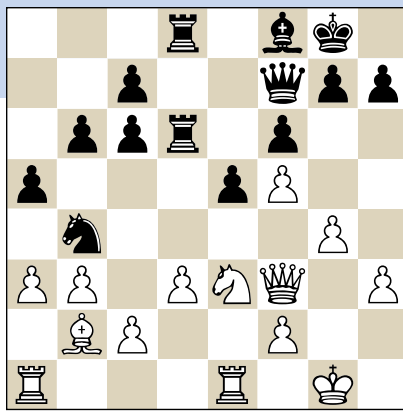


1. Rotshtein-Gofshtein

Tel Aviv 1997

position after 27. Qf3

Hard to believe, but such an experienced grandmaster failed to spot the instant killer which presumably you all did: 27... Rxe3! 28. Rxe3 Qxf4+.

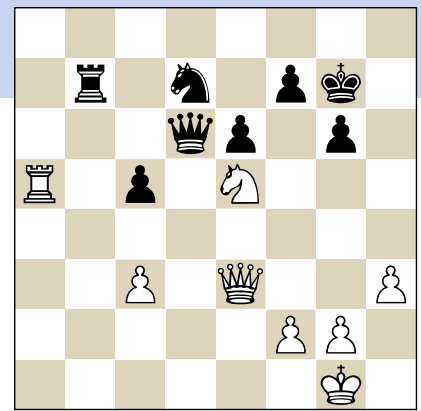


2. Sax-Geller

Moscow Interzonal 1982

position after 27. a3

The knight had a better flight square: 27... Qxc2! 28. Qxc2 Qxb3 29. Qxe5 fxe5 30. Qe3 Qxd3 and White's position is hopeless.

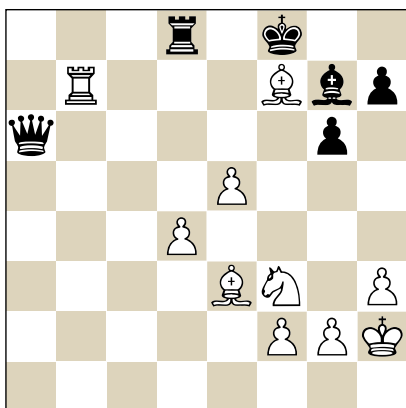


3. Morozevich-Giri

Biel 2012

position after 32... Qd6

The position is apparently not that innocent. White could obtain the upper hand with: 33. Qh6+! Qg8 (33... Qf6 34. Qf4+) 34. Qh8+! Qxh8 35. Qxf7+ Qg7 36. Qxd6, grabbing, for free, a healthy pawn.

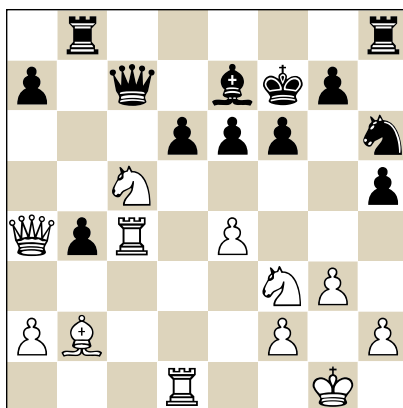


4. Chierici-Guramishvili

Reggio Emilia 2012

position after 30... Qa6

A more creative approach might generate consecutive forking by: 31. Qg5! Qxb7 32. Qe6+ Qe7 (32... Qxf7 33. Qxd8+) 33. Qg5+ Qd7 34. Qc5+ and wins.

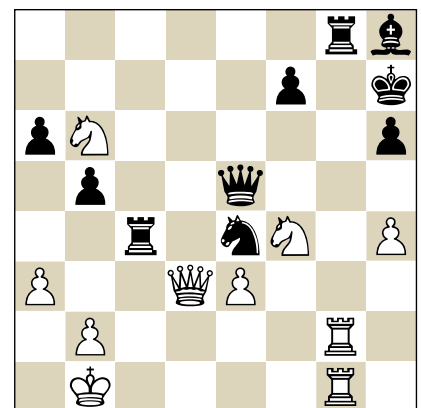


5. Moiseenko-Navara

Khanty-Mansiysk 2011

position after 23... Qh6

The astounding 24. Qe5!! would have done the trick! After 24... fxe5 (or 24... Rxc8 25. Qxd6! Qxd6 26. e5! fxe5 - 26... Qxc5 27. Rxd7+ - 27. Qe4! etc.) the brilliant 25. Qd7!! wins the exchange. A symphony of forks!



6. Timman-Hübner

Wijk aan Zee 1982

position after 37... Qb6

Black missed the opportunity to create a real diamond: 37... Qxb2+!! 38. Qxb2 Rxc1+ 39. Qa2 Qd1!! 40. Qxd1 Qc3+ 41. Qb3 Qxd1 42. Qd2 Qc3+ 43. Qa2 Qxe3, leaving White two pawns behind.



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**LAATSTE
NUMMER!**



JANIS NISII

The fourth leg of the 2012-13 FIDE Grand Prix was held in Thessaloniki, the second-largest city in Greece and the capital of Central Macedonia. With a history that spans over 2,300 years, Thessaloniki is the home of numerous archaeological sites together with Byzantine and Ottoman

monuments, many of them part of the UNESCO World Heritage. Besides being a major economic, industrial and political centre in South-eastern Europe, the city is renowned for its festivals and animated cultural and social life. **Janis Nisii** travelled to the place that National Geographic recently named 'one of the top tourist destinations worldwide' and saw Cuban grandmaster Leinier Dominguez score what he himself considers 'by far the best result of my career'.



Dominguez dominates Thessaloniki Grand Prix

Eager and focused till the very last day, tournament winner Leinier Dominguez scored plus-5 with a 2931 performance.

W

We don't know where Leinier Dominguez and his future wife Yanelys will travel for their upcoming honeymoon, but Thessaloniki might make an apt destination, as a good omen is what you're looking for on such occasions. The city founder, King Cassander, named it after his wife Thessalonikè, who was born on the day her father Philip II defeated the Thessalos (nikè meaning victory in Greek).

For our modern-day commander Leinier Dominguez the Thessalos

army had the features of 11 fearsome top grandmasters, almost all of them ahead of him in the world ranking. His victory was not at all obvious, especially after he suffered a defeat against Gata Kamsky in the very first round.

Furthermore, after a quick draw with Ponomarev in the second round, he found himself in a highly critical position against Ivanchuk the next day. The Ukrainian had played with determination and precision, applying a great deal of pressure on Black, and as early as move 23, White's position was already winning. The Ukrainian, though, as in many of his games of late, found himself in raging time-trouble and started blundering when his opponent was probably ready to resign.

In those tense moments, Dominguez's thoughts went back to similar circumstances in the sixth round

of the Linares tournament in 2009, when both he and Ivanchuk were very short on time: while his opponent was accidentally knocking over pieces, Dominguez put them back in his own time. In the end, Ivanchuk, despite having a decisive advantage, offered a draw to reward his opponent's sportsmanship.

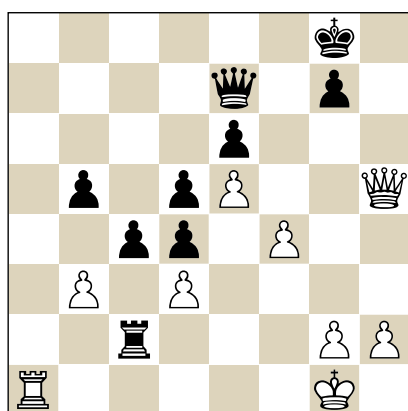
Leinier decided this was the right time to return the favour, and so, when Ivanchuk hung a piece, he didn't go for it and instead tried to repeat moves, as draw offers are not allowed by the Grand Prix regulations. Unfortunately, Ivanchuk's flag fell before he could complete his 40th move and the game was assigned to Dominguez.

This episode not only marked one of the most dramatic moments of the tournament, it also turned the tide for the Cuban. Getting a full point with black from a desperate position 'was psychologically very important', he

Thessaloniki

admitted, 'I guess I gained some confidence afterwards, and started playing much better.'

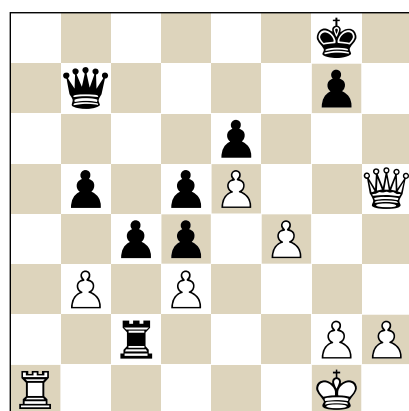
In the next round he played an enterprising game against Svidler. In a Ruy Lopez where both sides were trying to build up an attack, Dominguez boldly stuck to his plan even when Black's pawns were about to queen: all he wanted was his opponent's king!



Dominguez-Svidler
position after 26.♖a1

Here the machines suggest 26...♖f8, which is quite hard to play in such

tense moments, because it looks too passive. If a natural move like the one played in the game is not good, this shows that while the engine may have evaluated the position as equal for some time, Black was under more pressure than White. **26...♖b7** This turns out to be a mistake, as it allows White to introduce a third attacker, the f4-pawn. **27.♖e8+ ♔h7 28.♖h5+ ♔g8**



29.f5! Dominguez spurns a move repetition, paying no attention to his opponent's pawn mass on the queen-side. **29...cxb3 30.♖e8+ ♔h7**

31.♖h5+ ♔g8 32.♖e8+ ♔h7 33.♖g6+ ♔h8 34.f6! And this was the final nail in Black's coffin. Now 34...b2 fails to 35.♖a8+!, otherwise the attack just rages on. Here 34...♖c8 35.f7 is 1-0, and the game continuation is equally devastating. **34...♖c7 35.♖f1 ♖f7 36.♖f3** 1-0.

After two wins in a row there was a third one for Dominguez, suggesting that the old Italian saying *non c'è due senza tre* might hold some truth (literally: 'there's no two without three', meaning that certain things always come in threes).

The Cuban has always been a loyal Najdorf and Grünfeld player, yet he decided to vary twice with black in this tournament, against Kasimdzhanov and Bacrot: 'I noticed that it's difficult to play against such strong opposition with a limited number of openings,' he explained, 'so I decided to change and surprise them a little bit'. It worked out fine, as his choice earned him 1½ points in those two games, including a fine technical win against the former FIDE Champion.

Gata Kamsky led the field for eight of the 11 rounds and played some very good chess. In the end he finished joint second with Caruana with an excellent +4 score, which surprisingly wasn't enough to win the tournament. The freshly crowned US Champion showed a remarkable ability to rapidly expand on both sides of the board; his victories against Dominguez and Svidler are fine examples of this talent of his.

His style, made of positional play that slowly grinds out wins, might backfire when confronted with a similar approach, as happened in his game against Ponomarev, or when he was a bit vague and a more incisive attitude was required, as was the case against Grischuk, where he missed some good chances.

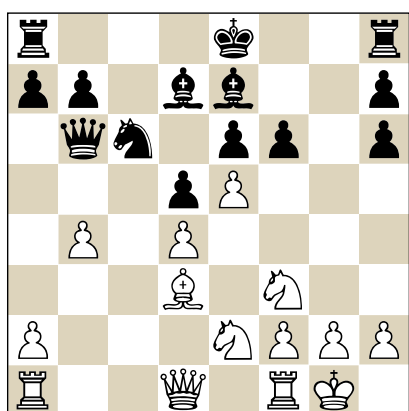
In the eighth round, on his birthday, Kamsky seized the sole lead, scoring his first ever victory over Nakamura



JANIS NISII

A game of cards on the free day. Alexander Grischuk drew 10 of his 11 games in Thessaloniki. As he feels he has been drawing an extraordinary number of games lately, the Russian suggested a name change to Drawchuk.

in a classical time-control game which features his best move in this tournament: the extremely sexy b4 push, allowing him to invade Black's position and opening up a line of attack to the queen. Kamsky wanted to open the b-file at all costs. To this effect it did not matter if Black controlled the b4-square with one piece or with 10 – he simply felt it had to be played!



Kamsky-Nakamura
position after 12.b4!

Black can capture the pawn with three pieces, but the resulting positions either present an unpleasant pin: 12...♘xb4 13.♖b1; 12...♙xb4 13.♗b1, or lead to a losing variation after 12...♙xb4? 13.♖b1 ♙a5 14.exf6 ♙xf6 15.♖xb7. White aims to go to b5, gaining some space advantage and removing the black knight from applying pressure to the centre, as would be the case after 12...fxe5 13.b5! or 12...0-0 13.b5 ♘b4 14.a4, with a fine position for White in either case. Realizing all this, Nakamura finally settled on **12...a6**.

Starting from Round 6, it became clear that only three players could fight for victory, as Kamsky, Dominguez and Caruana occupied the first three places from Round 1 until the end. At the start of the last round, Kamsky was leading Dominguez by half a point and Caruana by one point. Fabiano and Gata were playing each other and Dominguez needed to win against Topalov, with whom he had worked in the past for his world championship match against Anand.

It was the crucial round that would

‘Leinier decided this was the right time to return the favour, and so, when Ivanchuk hung a piece, he didn’t go for it and instead tried to repeat moves.’

establish the winner of the event and it was extremely important to overcome nervousness in order to stay concentrated. Dominguez knew that whatever happened in the last round, his tournament was already a success. ‘Maybe that thought helped me to keep cool in those very tense moments,’ he said.

Caruana wanted to press and not just give Kamsky the draw, but ‘of course I was also nervous, because my four last games had been pretty shaky. However, having a pretty strong score against Kamsky, I thought he might be under more pressure than me.’

Dominguez prevailed over Topalov: ‘I consider my win against a strong player like Veselin in an extremely important competitive moment definitely one of the most memorable moments in my career.’ Caruana managed to beat Kamsky, Dominguez conquered the event. ‘I won a pretty straightforward game,’ commented Caruana, ‘and I think I handled it quite well.’

The Italian, who never lived in Italy and recently moved from Lugano in Switzerland to Madrid, had dropped 25 rating points and slid down eight positions in the world ranking after his disastrous performance in Wijk aan Zee. However, he managed to

regain 33 Elo points in five months and 45 games.

Fabiano was delighted by his result in Thessaloniki and said his hard work during the past months is paying off: ‘In 2012 I didn’t work much at all. I was playing too much and when at home I just wanted to get away from chess!’ he reveals. ‘Now I’m trying to work quite intensely on the opening, like Kramnik, Leko, Aronian and Anand, the group of top players with a more classical approach. In general, my opening preparation went very well here and I was really worse only against Topalov.’

His only regrets are the game against Nakamura, in which he failed to convert his advantage, and his eighth-round loss to Dominguez: ‘I was in very bad form that day and I realized I wasn’t playing too well, but I kept pressing for no reason. I simply lost all my judgment during that game. To be honest, though, I could balance these two games with the luck I had against Topalov and Grischuk, so I don’t have any real regret: plus-4 is a great result against this field!’

Fabiano, just like most of the other players, took advantage of the nice pool in front of the sea at the Macedonia Palace, and this might have something to do with his last resolution: ‘I was thinking of taking up swimming, because I’ve heard it’s the best sport for chess players in terms of physical exercise. I should actually learn to do it properly, because right now I’m just, you know, floating.’

If by floating he managed to come close to the 2800 buoy, where will learning to swim lead him to?

The Thessaloniki Grand Prix was probably the most thrilling of the series so far, with 30 decisive games out of 66, lots of creative, original and adventurous play and many hard-fought games, including several that ended in a draw. Also drawn was one of the most exciting games of the event, Morozevich-Nakamura in Round 4, a really fantastic, crazy



NEW!

Alejandro Ramirez: The Reti, a flexible attacking opening

Alejandro Ramirez is the only Grandmaster from Central America and achieved his title at the age of 15. Since then he has played in top level events including the World Chess Championship in 2004, three Olympiads and he was the winner of the 2010 US Open. The Nimzo-Indian, the Gruenfeld and the King's Indian Defence are three incredibly uncomfortable defences to meet, especially if you lack deep theoretical knowledge. This hypermodern DVD gives new ideas on how to squash these setups with sound, positional play based on double fianchetto systems. This DVD focuses on the move 1.Nf3 and covers the necessary variations to meet Black's most popular systems, including the ones listed above as well as the Slav and Catalan/Orthodox type setups. White steers away from mainstream theory while still being on the aggressive side and causing Black problems from the beginning. GM Ramirez presents his ideas by means of some of his own games as well as top-level games by Kramnik, Akopian, Malakhov, Gashimov and others. Video running time: 4 hours

27,90 €



Lubomir Ftacnik: English Hedgehog Defence

This DVD by Lubomir Ftacnik deals with the Hedgehog structure and its phenomenal potential for generating active counterplay with Black. The appeal of elastic piece development around a dynamic pawn structure has helped to spread this concept to many other openings. The author has consciously limited his survey to the English Hedgehog with an emphasis on the challenges Black faces following the centralisation of White's queen after 1.c4 c5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 e6 4.g3 b6 5.Bg2 Bb7 6.0-0 Be7 7.d4 cxd4 8.Qxd4. While Black will have to survive various challenges to his position, as the aggressor enjoys a slight advantage in development and has great freedom of movement for his pieces, once the defender manages to fend off direct aggression, his prospects are usually quite promising. The idea has stood the test of time and has been resistant to the plethora of rather ingenious ideas White players have come up with over the last two decades. The rise in popularity of an alternative plan with 7.Re1 is a strong indicator that Black emerges from the main lines in good health. Any player able to cope with some pressure in the English Hedgehog will be amply rewarded with flexible, action-packed positions, and plentiful Black counter-chances. Video running time: 3 hours 50 min

27,90 €

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game. And, as said, it wasn't the only one. As a smiling Caruana noted: 'Players were in a slightly wild mode, especially Ivanchuk and Morozevich, kind of playing a bit random, so there were a lot of crazy games, but I think that's interesting for the public, not many boring draws at least!'

Grischuk, the only unbeaten player in the tournament, joked about his recent drawing tendency: 'Peter Leko as the King of Draws? That's the past, now it's Drawchuk! I've scored 10/11 draws here, 11/14 at the London Candidates', 9/11 at the London Grand Prix and 13/14 in Kazan!'. His only win in Thessaloniki, however, was actually pretty instructive: an exhausting 102-move battle against Nakamura that was an excellent demonstration of the importance of decision-making in chess as opposed to the brute force of the engines, which struggled to make progress in this game. Grischuk did so with a very long and complicated plan that involved a king march all the way to the kingside and all the way back, creating two winning plans both of which required the black king's attention.

Some of the Grand Prix rules were purposely designed to provide excitement to the public. 'The rule where you can't have draw offers changed everything', said Caruana, 'If you feel you're in danger, you can't end the game prematurely; there's no way out!'

The time control of 120 minutes for the first forty moves and 60 minutes for the next twenty moves (without any increment) and then 15 minutes and an increment of 30 seconds per move for the rest of the game, led to several animated endgames and even to quite a bit of drama, causing some controversy in the chess community, as it often happens when this rule is in place. But what did the top players in Greece think about it? Caruana: 'When there's no increment it's not so easy to know when you have to think and when you have to play quickly. There's always going to be a lot of critical moments

during the game, but where they're going to happen or how many they're going to be is totally unpredictable. It's a bit harder to know how much time you should take, because if you use too much of it too early, you could be in a critical situation where you strain out of time; you need to always keep some kind of reserve. Good time management,' he concludes, 'is one of the skills a player needs to have. In this tournament I always tried to get to the time-control with at least five minutes on my last move; with this kind of safety I wasn't ever really in time-trouble.'

Dominguez, instead, is not exactly a fan of this rule, even though he recognized that he definitely showed a better time management in this event: 'I always prefer to play with the increment, I think it's a brilliant idea. It's good for chess to avoid some crazy time-trouble situations where sometimes the games are decided by things that have nothing to do with chess.'

Unexpectedly, the main victim of this time-control, Vassily Ivanchuk, didn't express aversion against it, nor put his bad result down to it: 'I've played many tournaments without increments, it's a completely playable time-control. Two hours is a lot of time!' he said. He suggested different reasons for his poor performance in Thessaloniki: 'I didn't manage to come

back after a loss or wasn't able to play bad positions and I didn't know how to fight against all this. I'm grateful to all my fans for their constant support, but sometimes it's very difficult for me to play good chess. I feel very tired and very shocked after this tournament. At the moment there are many things that I don't understand, both in chess and in life. It's a period of changes.' It's quite common for Chucky to become a bit existentialist after a bad tournament, and trying to cheer him up recalling his victories against Carlsen and Kramnik at the Candidates' didn't really work: 'What's the surprise? I've won against them many times before. Okay, they are strong players, but what's so special about beating them?'

Morozevich believes that professionals should be responsible for adapting themselves to any time-control and that two hours are enough if your brain is functioning properly: 'I can't complain that I didn't have enough time to calculate variations. If I'm doing it slowly, if my mind is not working well, then I will most probably go into time-trouble and make mistakes, but I can only blame my lack of professionalism, not the rules. What I don't really like, instead, is when organizers experiment with the schedule and decide to start the games in the morning', he adds. 'This is a disaster, because they're mess-



At the closing party FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov chatted with his former Vice-President Zurab Azmaiparashvili, who these days is First Deputy of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia.



Alexander
Morozevich:
‘This is just
plain stupid!
There should
be a chess law
that forbids
organizers to
start a chess
game before
1 p.m.’

ing with the rhythm of our living, with our brain waves, and they seriously affect the quality of the games. In these cases, I just decline to play the event.’

He surely had a point, and undoubtedly many of his colleagues would agree with this. His protest, though, became quite vigorous as he went on: ‘I’m tired of trying to get people back to their senses, explaining them that it makes no sense to play in the morning at top chess events. This is just plain stupid! There should be a chess law that forbids organizers to start a chess game before 1 p.m., because this rule doesn’t interfere with our professional qualities, it interferes with our physiology!’

Probably Moro’s theory, suggesting that chess players are a different species, is a bit far-fetched, but his idea that time-trouble is a consequence of tension and nerves has a rationale. Caruana expressed a similar thought when asked if Kamsky mishandled his last-round game against him: ‘I don’t think he did anything strategically wrong, just that he didn’t manage his time so well, which I believe is just a sign that he was nervous. He was playing good moves, but he got too low on time until it was no longer possible to defend the position, which was very complicated.’

The key to success is rarely a single key. More frequently it’s a combination of factors that just fall into place in perfect harmony. The success of

the Thessaloniki organizers, led by the tournament director Theodoros Tsorbatzoglou, is no exception and it’s even more valuable considering they had literally a handful of days to set up the first top chess event in Greece since the 1988 Olympiad.

The contribution of the local chess community was crucial: dozens of chess players of all ages, from children to more mature chess enthusiasts, attended throughout the tournament, and live Internet broadcasts offered hours of analysis by GMs Stelios Halikias and Ioannis Papaioannou, joined by FM Sotiris Logothesis, who carried out their task with competence and enthusiasm.

The playing venue was supplied by the main sponsor of the event, the Makedonia Palace, a five-star hotel recently taken over by the Russian-born Greek businessman Ivan Savvidin, a contact of FIDE President Ilyumzhinov. The hotel offered ample space for chess: besides providing the playing venue, it hosted a chess themed painting exhibition by Nicolas Sphicas and a huge screen at the entrance hall transmitted games or pictures from the past Grand Prix tournament when rounds weren’t going on. The analysis room for the public of local amateurs and visitors was set up in the spacious bar lounge, with commentators offering explanations directed to a non-specialist audience.

Similarly, Dominguez’s success wasn’t just the result of his very good play and a touch of luck. He mentioned two circumstances that he considered extremely important. First of all the presence of his father. ‘He’s always very positive,’ he explained, ‘and managed to keep me in a good mood even when things weren’t going well. He also helped me to keep a good routine from the beginning to the end of the tournament, something which – believe it or not – I had never managed before.’

He also enjoyed his stay in Thessaloniki very much, and he makes clear that it’s not because he won the tournament: ‘I just loved the place from the beginning. The weather was perfect for me and I felt that the organization and the conditions were really great. Me and my father had a wonderful time there. We would go out every night to have dinner in the city, walk and relax. In the end it all worked out just fine. I think this is by far the best result of my career,’ he concludes. ‘I mean, to score +5 in such strong company cannot really be compared to any of my previous successes, which were also nice and memorable for me, but in this tournament all the players were unbelievably strong and that made a huge difference.’

Thessaloniki 2013															cat. XXI
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TPR
1	Leinier Dominguez	IGM CUB 2723	*	0	1	½	½	1	½	1	1	½	1	1	8 2931
2	Gata Kamsky	IGM USA 2741	1	*	0	½	½	1	1	½	1	½	1	½	7½ 2887
3	Fabiano Caruana	IGM ITA 2774	0	1	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	7½ 2884
4	Alexander Grischuk	IGM RUS 2779	½	½	½	*	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	½	6 2787
5	Ruslan Ponomarev	IGM UKR 2742	½	½	½	½	*	0	½	½	½	1	½	1	6 2790
6	Rustam Kasimdzhanov	IGM UZB 2699	0	0	½	½	1	*	1	½	½	½	½	½	5½ 2758
7	Hikaru Nakamura	IGM USA 2775	½	0	½	0	½	0	*	1	1	½	½	½	5 2715
8	Veselin Topalov	IGM BUL 2793	0	½	0	½	½	½	0	*	½	0	1	1	4½ 2684
9	Peter Svidler	IGM RUS 2769	0	0	½	½	½	½	0	½	*	1	0	1	4½ 2686
10	Etienne Bacrot	IGM FRA 2725	½	½	0	½	0	½	½	1	0	*	½	0	4 2653
11	Alexander Morozevich	IGM RUS 2760	0	0	0	½	½	½	½	0	1	½	*	½	4 2650
12	Vassily Ivanchuk	IGM UKR 2755	0	½	0	½	0	½	½	0	0	1	½	*	3½ 2620



NOTES BY

Leinier Dominguez

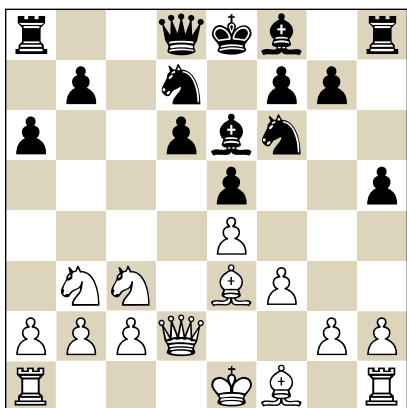
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Fabiano Caruana

Leinier Dominguez

Thessaloniki 2013 (9)

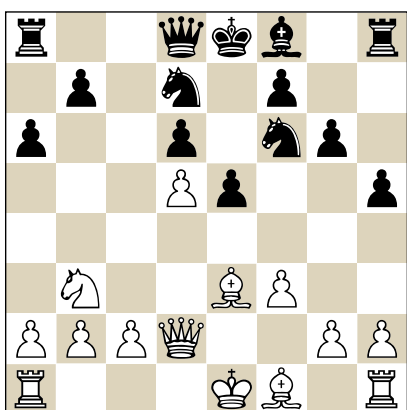
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.f3 e5 7.♗b3 ♙e6 8.♙e3 h5 9.♚d2 ♘bd7



10.♗d5 The main alternative is 10.0-0-0, with which I was confronted twice this year, against Gabrielian in the Russian League, and against Inarkiev at the Capablanca Memorial.

10...♙xd5 11.exd5 g6

A flexible move, preparing the normal fianchetto, but also keeping other options open.

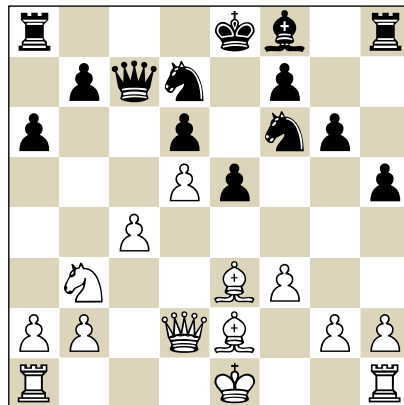


12.♙e2 Also interesting is 12.0-0-0, the first example being Anand-Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 2008. It was then played in other high-level games, with decent results for Black.

12...♗c7

12...♙g7 is also possible; it led to a very interesting fight in Leko-Wojtaszek, Istanbul 2012.

13.c4 13.♗a5 was seen in another of my games, Bologan-Dominguez, World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011, a tense fight that I managed to win after some complications.

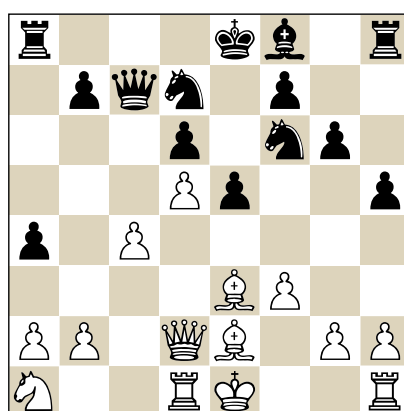


13...a5!?

This is probably a novelty, but it's a typical idea in these positions. Black gains space on the queenside and for some time avoids the possible white pawn expansion b2-b4, c4-c5, etc. It's certain, though, that the white knight will get to b5 at some point, which could be quite unpleasant for Black.

13...♙g7 is also possible and is what I played two years ago in Arenas-Dominguez, Caribbean Zonal 2011.

14.♖d1 a4 15.♗a1

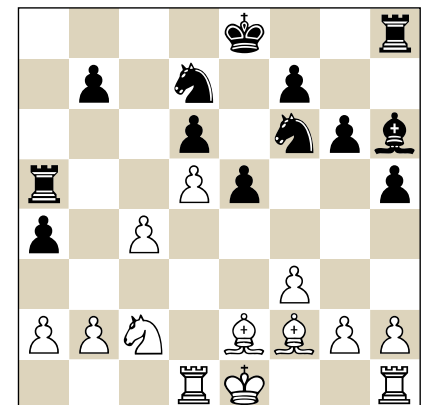


15...♗a5 I also briefly considered 15...♗g8, because I knew it was the other suggestion by the computer, but in the end I found the text-move more natural.

16.♗xa5 ♖xa5 17.♗c2 ♙h6 18.♙f2

If the dark-coloured bishops get exchanged, the endgame will be very comfortable for Black, so the text-move is more or less forced. Here we reached an interesting position,

which usually appears with the queens still on the board, and it's considered acceptable for Black.



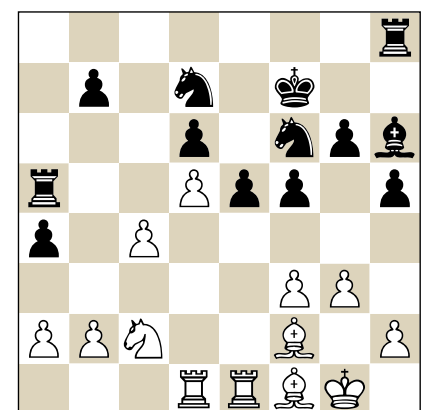
18...♙e7 I thought that this was an interesting option, made possible by the fact that the queens have been exchanged, although Black should be careful, because the position still retains some middlegame elements and the king could become vulnerable at some point.

19.g3 A normal move, probably my opponent wanted to keep the option to play f3-f4 in case of a possible ...e5-e4 from my side.

19...♗e8 I thought it was natural to jump-start my pawns on the kingside.

20.0-0 f5 21.♖fe1 ♗ef6 22.♙f1

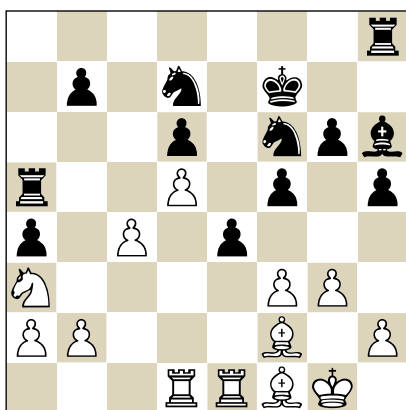
♗f7 There was no particular threat, but it appeared natural to take the king away from the file just in case.



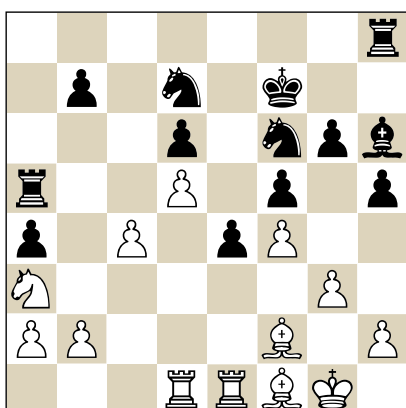
23.♗a3 Preparing to attack d6, which is now left undefended. Moreover, moving the knight to b5 was obviously next on White's agenda anyway.

23...e4!

I felt it was just the right moment for this advance, especially because I was already considering sacrificing the exchange on b5.



24.f4 In case of 24.♘b5 I obviously wanted to play 24...♙xb5 25.cxb5 ♘e5, and Black is more than fine, e.g: 26.fxe4 (bad is 26.♙g2? exf3 27.♙f1 ♙c8, when Black is clearly better, or 26.♙h1? ♘xf3 27.♙e2 ♘g4) 26... ♘f3+ 27.♙g2 ♘xe1+ 28.♙xe1 ♘xe4, and Black has some initiative.



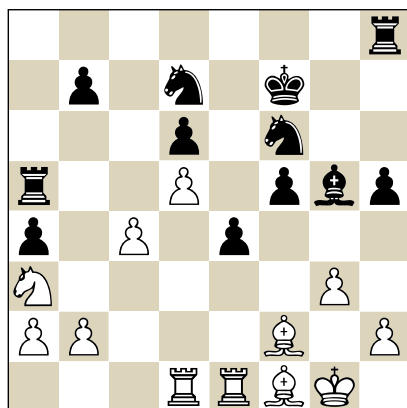
24...g5! During the game I thought this was the most interesting and ac-

tive continuation. Of course, 24...♘g4 was also possible, but after 25.♙d4 ♙g7 26.♙xg7 ♙xg7 27.♘b5 ♙a6 28.♙e2 I thought that in such a structure White didn't run much risk.

25.fxg5

Here 25.♘b5 is not good either, because after the logical 25...♙xb5 26.cxb5 gxf4 27.gxf4 ♙xf4 Black has a pleasant position.

25...♙xg5



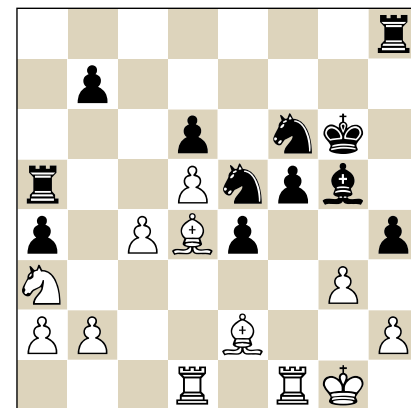
26.♙d4

A good decision. The bishop is well placed here in any variation. Also possible was 26.♘b5, but after the standard exchange sacrifice Black has full compensation: 26...♙xb5 27.cxb5 ♘e5 28.♙g2 (28.♙e2? e3 shows well why 26.♙d4 is important) 28... h4, and White's position is unpleasant in practical play. I will give just a line to illustrate how quickly things can

go wrong for White: 29.♙e2? hxg3 30.hxg3 ♘f3 31.♙g1 ♘g4, and Black wins.

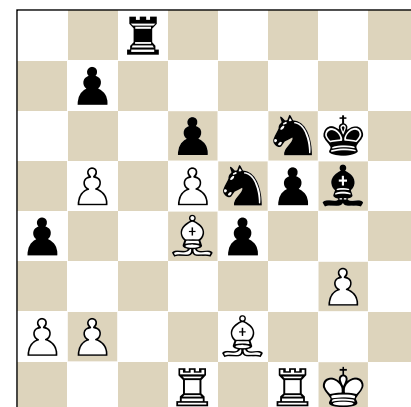
26...♘e5 27.♙e2 h4 28.♙f1 ♙g6

After some logical moves, the time has come for White to execute the planned knight jump.



29.♘b5 ♙xb5! 30.cxb5 hxg3 31.hxg3 ♙c8

I rightly assessed that Black has excellent compensation here.



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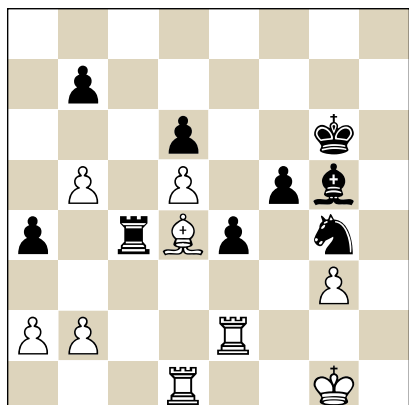
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32. ♖f2

After the seemingly natural 32. ♖xe5 Black has 32... ♖e3+! 33. ♖g2 dxe5 34. d6 ♖c2, and White is in trouble.

32... ♖fg4 33. ♖xg4 ♖xg4 34. ♖e2 ♖c4

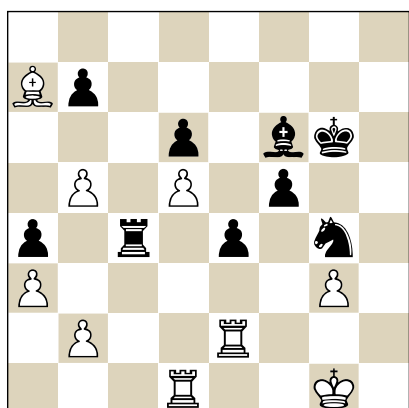


At this point I felt quite optimistic. Although I don't even have a pawn for the exchange, Black's position is very active and in practice it is difficult to play with white.

35. a3 Depriving the black rook of the b4-square.

35... ♖f6 36. ♖a7!

After 36. ♖xf6?! ♖xf6, followed by 37... ♖e5, White is in trouble, of course.

**36... ♖e5?!**

This move is not bad, but after having missed the sequence a3 and ♖a7, I felt a little confused.

Obviously far stronger was 36... ♖e5!, followed by ... ♖d3 and, although it's not a big deal, White is under some pressure.

37. ♖g2 ♖f6

This is not really necessary, but it doesn't spoil anything either.

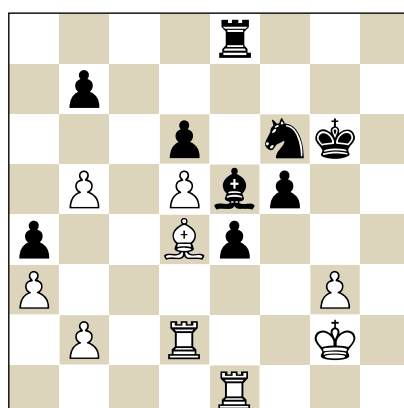
38. ♖dd2 ♖c8 39. ♖d4 ♖e8 40. ♖e1

ANASTASIYA KARLOVICH



Leinier Dominguez believed the presence of his father had played a crucial role. 'He helped me to keep a good routine from the beginning to the end of the tournament.'

The last move before the time-control. The engine's suggestion 40. b6!? makes some sense as well.

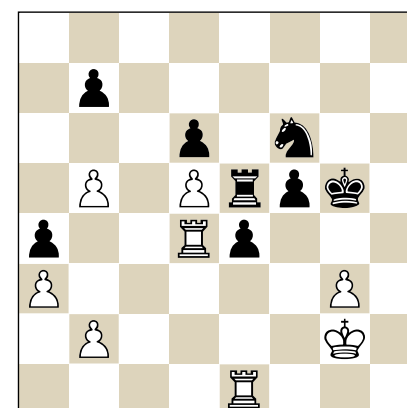


40... ♖g5 I played this quickly, because I had little time and wanted to reach the time-control, but possibly even better was 40... ♖xd5, as after 41. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 White can't play 42. ♖ed1 because of 42... ♖e3+, so White has to play something like 42. ♖h3 f4 43. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 44. ♖xd5, and it's a draw.

41. ♖xe5

After some thought, Fabiano decided to exchange the bishops. One of the alternatives was 41. ♖e3+ ♖g4 42. ♖h1, but after 42... ♖xg3 43. ♖h6 f4! (43... ♖e5? runs into 44. ♖g6+ ♖h5 45. ♖g5+) 44. ♖xf6 fxe3 Black should be safe.

41... ♖xe5 42. ♖d4

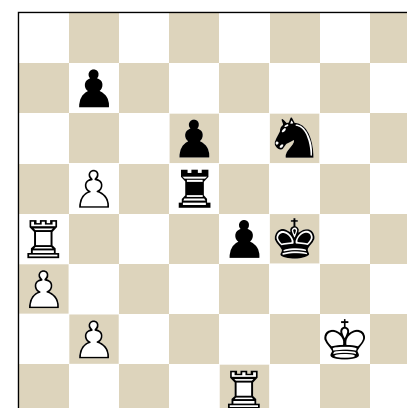


42... f4 Clarifying the situation a bit with 42... ♖xd5 was possible, but it looked unclear to me after, for example, 43. ♖xa4 ♖f6 44. b6.

43. gxf4+ ♖xf4 44. ♖xa4

If 44. ♖f1+, Black has 44... ♖e3!.

44... ♖xd5

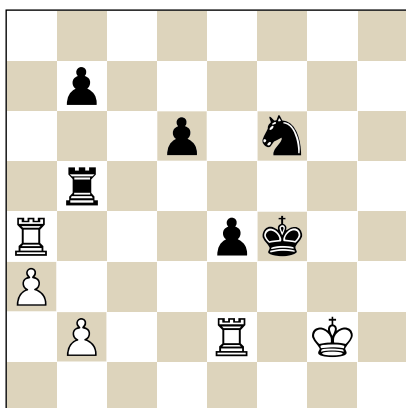


45. ♖e2?! This doesn't spoil anything, nor does it basically change the

evaluation of the position, but it's a first step in the wrong direction.

Without doubt, the most practical thing for White to do was to liquidate to a drawn rook ending. This is why I was expecting 45. ♖f1+ ♖e5 46. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 47. ♖xe4, with a draw after 47... ♖d2+ 48. ♖f3 ♖xb2 49. a4 or 47... ♖xb5 48. b4.

45... ♖xb5



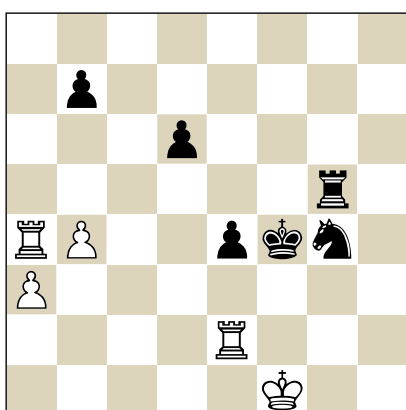
46. b4?

Caruana played this pretty fast, but it's a blunder: the white rook is cut off on a4 and Black can use this situation to coordinate his forces and get his central pawns on the march.

White had to play something like 46. ♖f2+ ♖e5 47. ♖f1 d5 48. ♖g2, when, despite the splendid position for Black, White should reach the draw without much trouble.

46... ♖g5+ 47. ♖f1 ♖g4

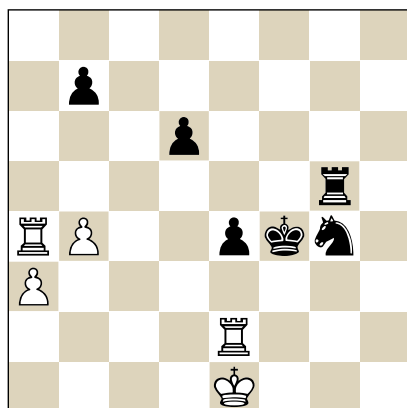
Now White is in serious trouble.



48. ♖e1?

A human reaction, but it's another mistake, which in this case goes unpunished. Moreover, it's difficult to recommend an appropriate alternative for White. After 48. b5 ♖e3+

(the immediate 48... d5 is also strong) 49. ♖e1 ♖g1+ 50. ♖d2 ♖d1+ 51. ♖c3 ♖d3+ 52. ♖b2 d5 53. ♖f2+ ♖e5 things look sad for White. And if 48. ♖a8 ♖e3+ 49. ♖e1 ♖g1+ 50. ♖d2 ♖d1+ 51. ♖c3 ♖d3+ 52. ♖b2 then 52... ♖c4+, and I don't think White will be able to survive this position.



48... ♖e3?

Fatigue began to creep in. I had a relatively simple win at hand: 48... e3! 49. ♖g2 ♖f3 (I think I missed this simple move) 50. ♖g1, and now Black has the strong 50... ♖f2! 51. ♖xg5 ♖d3+ 52. ♖d1 e2+, winning.

49. ♖f2+ ♖e5 50. ♖a7 ♖g7

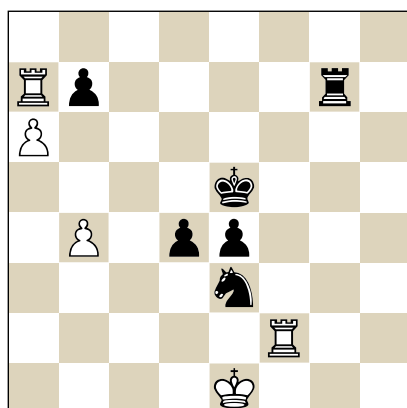
Luckily for me, Black still retains some advantage, which in practice is fairly serious, because it's quite uncomfortable to play this kind of positions with white, while the black moves are relatively simple.

51. a4 d5 52. a5?

This is also a mistake, although it is quite an understandable one. Slightly better was 52. ♖h2, although the white position is still difficult.

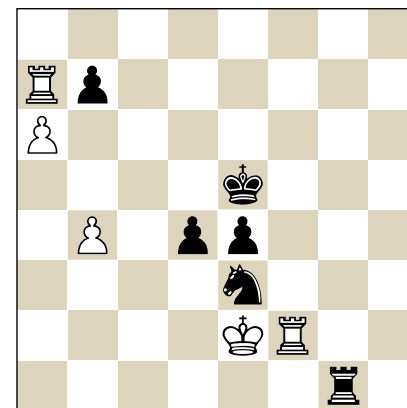
52... d4 53. a6

Black is again very close to victory, but...



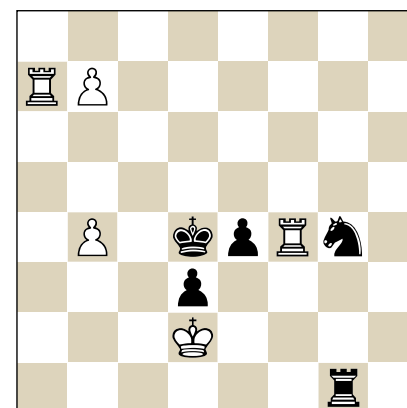
53... ♖g1+ The strongest move was 53... d3! 54. axb7 (54. ♖xb7 ♖g1+ 55. ♖d2 ♖d5! followed by ...e3 or ...♖d4 is also winning) 54... ♖g1+ 55. ♖d2 ♖d4, and it's mate.

54. ♖e2



54... bxa6?

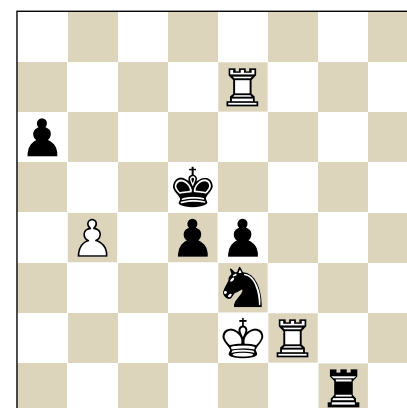
Another mistake on my part that seriously endangers the win. Both 54... ♖c4 and 54... ♖d5 were winning. In fact, several knight moves would win here, the clearest win being 54... ♖g4! 55. axb7 d3+ 56. ♖d2 ♖d4, and against 57. ♖f4 Black has the beautiful



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

57... ♖f2!!, and it will be mate in two.

55. ♖e7+ ♖d5 The last important moment of the game.



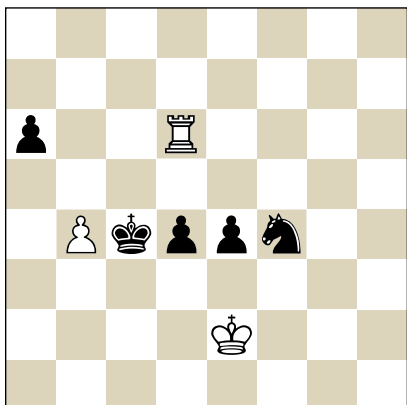
56.♞d7+?

Under heavy pressure, Fabiano makes the last mistake of the game, after which he is beyond salvation.

The move that worried me most during the game was 56.♞c7, but this, in fact, also loses trivially after 56...♜g4 57.♞c5+ ♜e6 58.♞f4 d3+ 59.♞d2 ♞g2+ 60.♞c3 ♞c2+ 61.♞b3 ♞xc5 62. bxc5 e3, and Black queens a pawn.

White's best defending chances were offered by 56.♞h2!, which in fact some commentators pointed out after the game, and the win is very complicated for Black; probably impossible even, for example:

A) 56...♞g2+ 57.♞xg2 ♜xg2 58. ♞d7+ ♞c4 59.♞d6 ♜f4+



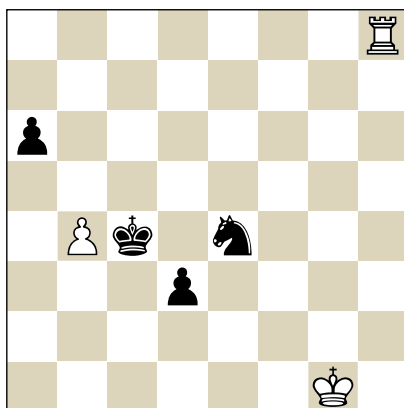
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

60.♞d1! (60.♞e1? e3 61.♞xa6 d3 62.♞d1 ♜e2!) 60...e3 61.♞xa6 d3 62.♞d6 ♞c3 63.♞c6+ ♞xb4 64.♞d6, and I don't see how Black can make progress.

B) 56...♜g4 doesn't create problems either: 57.♞h5+ ♞c4 58.♞xe4 ♜f6 59.♞xd4+ (59.♞c5+ ♞xb4 60. ♞ee5 ♜d7 61.♞g5! is also possible) 59...♞xd4 60.♞a5, with a draw.

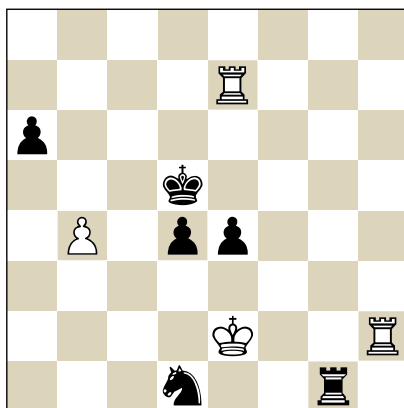
C 56...♜d1!? is perhaps a move that offers more practical chances:

C1) If White plays the natural 57. ♞h5+?, Black goes 57...♞c4, and wins: 58.♞xe4 (58.♞c5+ ♞xb4) 58...♜c3+ 59.♞f2 ♜xe4+ 60.♞xg1 d3 61.♞h8



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

61...♞xb4! (only this way – 61...d2? is too hasty: 62.♞d8 ♞c3 63.♞f1 ♞c2 64.♞e2 ♜c3+ 65.♞e3 d1 ♞ 66.♞xd1 ♜xd1+ 67.♞d4, and it's a draw) 62. ♞d8 ♞c3 63.♞g2 a5 64.♞f3 ♜d2+ 65.♞f2 ♜c4 66.♞a8 ♞c2 67.♞c8 d2 68.♞xc4+ ♞d3 69.♞c8 d1 ♞ 70.♞d8+ ♞c2 71.♞xd1 ♞xd1 72.♞e3 ♞c2! (72...a4? 73.♞d3), and Black wins.



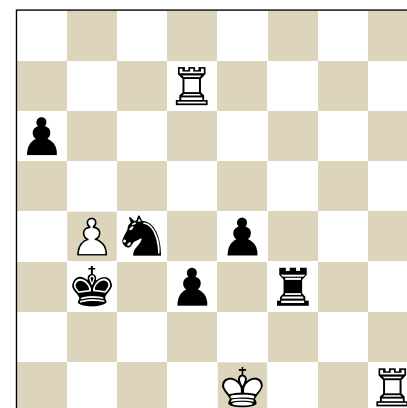
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

C2) 57.♞c7! (another important defensive move, which isn't easy at all to see over the board) 57...d3+ (57... ♜c3+ 58.♞f2, and Black can't defend against the check on h5 with 58... ♞g5? because of 59.♞c5+) 58.♞d2 ♜b2 59.♞d7+ ♞c4 60.♞e3! ♞c3 61.♞xe4 ♞g4+ 62.♞f3 ♞xb4 63.♞a7, and it seems to me that this should be a draw.

56...♞c4

Now it's totally lost for White.

57.♞c7+ ♞b3 58.♞h2 ♞g3 59. ♞d7 d3+ 60.♞e1 ♞f3 61.♞h1 ♜c4



The coordination of the black pieces is now perfect; the pawns are ready to advance.

62.♞d4 ♞e3+ 63.♞f2 ♞e2+ 64.♞g3 ♞c3 65.♞d8 d2

White resigned.

Despite the mistakes, which are normal in a long and tense game like this one, I believe that this was the most interesting game I played in the tournament. It was a great fight from start to finish, and only after winning this game did I begin to really think about first place.

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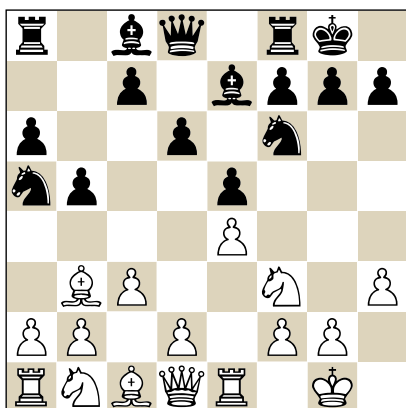
Gata Kamsky

Alexander Morozevich

Thessaloniki 2013 (10)

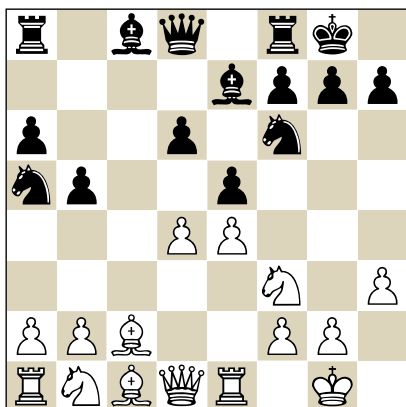
This was an important game before the last rest day, so I was a bit nervous as to what to expect from my opponent.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♙b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘a5



And here is the surprise. I haven't looked at the Chigorin lines of the Spanish in years. On the other hand, I didn't have to spend energy trying to recollect the analysis, and that was the good news!

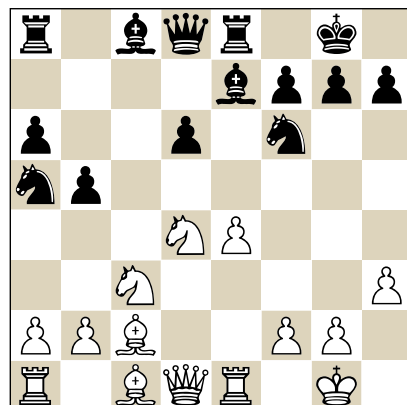
10.♙c2 c5 11.d4 cxd4 12.cxd4



12...exd4 Another surprise, but thankfully, I played a lot of Spanish games in the 90s with both colours, and I vividly remembered having seen a similar structure already. The key points remembered were that White doesn't really have to worry about de-

fending his pawn on e4 and try to set up an assault position on Black's king, starting with the knight on f5, since Black's light-squared bishop on c8 is going to b7.

13.♘xd4 ♖e8 14.♘c3



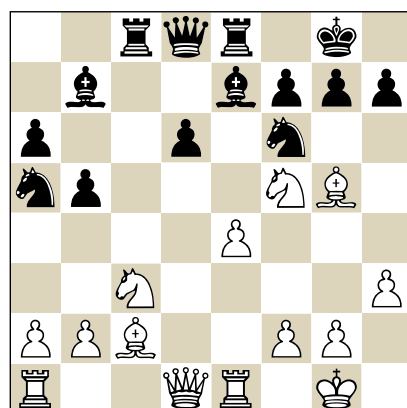
14...♙b7

14...g6!?, preventing the knight jump to f5, doesn't quite work: 15.b4 ♗c7 16.♘xb5 axb5 17.bxa5 ♖xa5 18.♙d2, and Black loses a pawn.

15.♘f5 ♖c8

I was quite surprised with the quickness of my opponent's moves. It became obvious that he had analysed the position to an advanced level. How far exactly, I was only told after the game.

16.♙g5 A developing move and also setting up a nasty pin, as Black will not quite be able to play ...♙f8 anymore. I felt confident that White has some sort of an advantage here, due in a large part to the magnificent animal on f5.



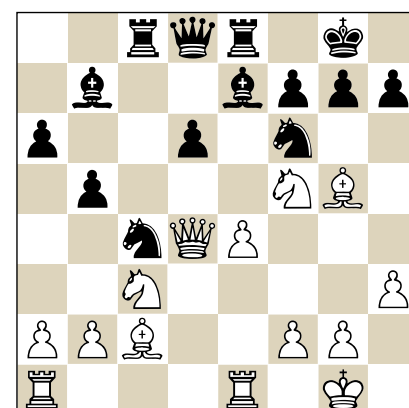
16...♘c4 Now that Black has completed his development, he's attempting to take over the initiative. White hasn't completed his queenside development and his ♙c2 is doing nothing, so I had to do something here.

The choice really was between 17.♙b3 and developing the queen to f3, and putting the queen on d4. I figured that on d4 the queen would be ideally placed and White's initiative would be worth more than a pawn.

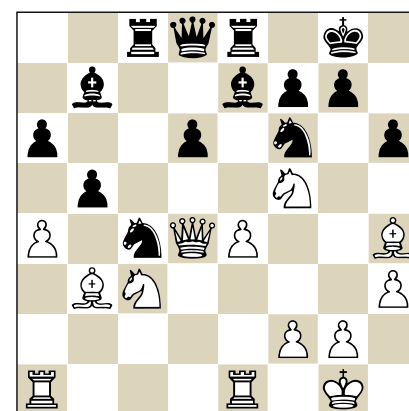
Alternatively, 16...b4, with the idea of eliminating any potential ♘c3-d5 move, was interesting: 17.♘a4 ♙f8 18.f3! (much stronger than 18.♖c1 ♘c4 19.♗d4. White simply cements his centre and fixes Black's weaknesses on d6 and b4, ensuring a small but lasting advantage) 18...h6 19.♙h4, and now 19...g6? runs into 20.e5.

Less good was 16...♙f8?! 17.♗d4 ♘c6 18.♗d2 ♘e5 19.♙b3 ♘c4 20.♗d4, with a sizeable advantage for White.

17.♗d4!



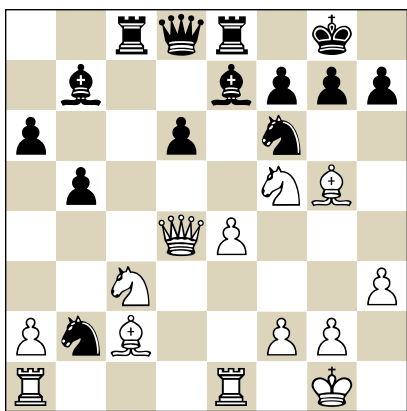
17...♘xb2? This is clearly too risky. An important improvement for Black was 17...h6!?, since compared to the game White wouldn't get a winning line thanks to a back rank mate. But to foresee this, you have to be a computer!: 18.♙h4 ♘xb2 19.♙b3 ♘c4 20.a4! (the only way to fight for an advantage, otherwise Black is completely fine), and now:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 20...♖a5 21.♙d5 ♘c6 22.♙xc6 ♙xc6 23.axb5 axb5 24.♖e3, and Black's position is precarious;

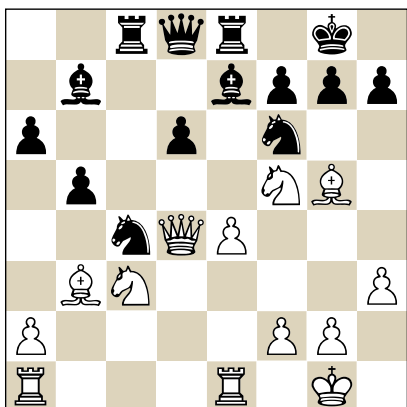
B) 20...♙d7 21.axb5 axb5 22.♘xb5 ♙xb5 23.♙a4 ♙e5 24.♙xe5 dxe5 25.♙xe8 ♖xe8 26.♖a7 ♙b4 27.♖b1 ♙xe4 (27...♙c5 28.♖axb7 ♘xe4 29.g4!, with a superior endgame for White. However, there would still be big technical questions) 28.♘h6+, and White wins.



18.♙b3?

For failing to see White's 22nd move. The game would have ended much faster after 18.♘d5! ♙xd5 (18...♖xc2 loses to 19.♘dx7+ ♖xe7 20.♙xf6 ♖d2 21.♙xd2 gxf6 22.♘xe7+ ♙xe7 23.♙xb2) 19.exd5 ♖xc2 20.♖xe7 ♖xe7 21.♙xf6 gxf6 22.♙xf6!. This is what I had missed: 22...♖e1+ 23.♖xe1, and Black can't recapture due to the mate on the 8th rank.

18...♘c4



19.♖ad1?!

Played with the idea of centralization and possibly ♖d3-g3, starting a king-side attack.

However, 19.a4! was much stronger than the move in the game. White hits Black on the weak pawn chain just



JANIS NISII

Gata Kamsky led the field for 8 of the 11 rounds. Surprisingly, the American Champion's excellent plus-4 score was not enough for first prize.

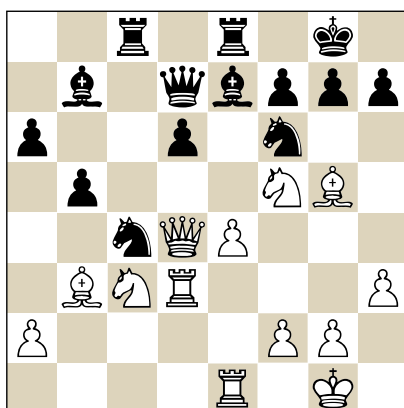
before Black can organize his defence:

19...♙b6 20.axb5 ♙xd4 21.♘xd4 axb5 22.♖a7 ♘a5 23.♘cxb5 ♘xb3 24.♘xb3 ♖b8 25.♙xf6 gxf6 26.♘a5 ♙a8 27.♘c7 ♖ec8 28.♘xa8 ♖xa8 29.♖xa8 ♖xa8 30.♘c4 ♙f8 31.g4! (cementing Black's pawn islands and making the position a fairly easy technical win) 31...♖a4 32.♘b6 ♖b4 33.♘d5 ♖b7 34.♖a1 ♙g7 35.♖a8 and White is winning.

19...♙d7

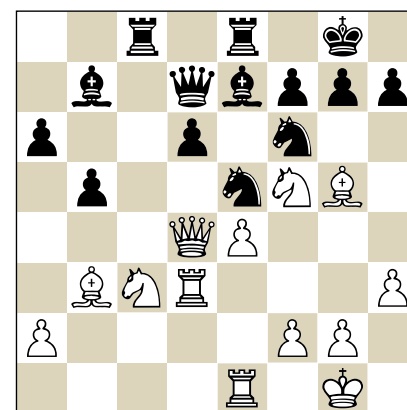
White is also better after 19...h6 20.♙h4 ♖c5 21.♙xc5 dxc5 22.♖xd8 ♙xd8 23.♙xc4 bxc4 24.♘d6 ♖e7 25.♙xf6 gxf6 26.♖b1 ♙c6 27.♘xc4 ♖d7.

20.♖d3



20...♙d8?

The last mistake of the game, after which Black is lost. Black's only move was 20...♘e5!.

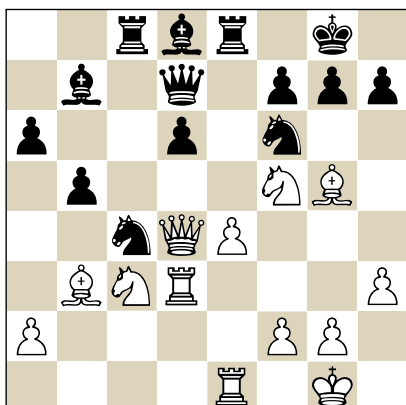


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) White achieves nothing with 21.♙xe5 dxe5 22.♖xd7 ♘xd7 23.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 24.♙xe7 ♖xc3 25.♖d1 ♙c8 (25...♙c6 loses to 26.♙b4) 26.♙b4 ♖c6 27.♙d5 ♖c7, with an equal position.

B) 21.♖g3 ♘h5 22.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 23.♙xe7 ♘g3 24.♙xd6 ♘c4 25.♙c5 ♙xd4 26.♙xd4 ♘h5 (after 26...♖d8 27.♙a7 White still keeps his bishop-pair advantage) 27.a4 ♘f4! (27...b4?!

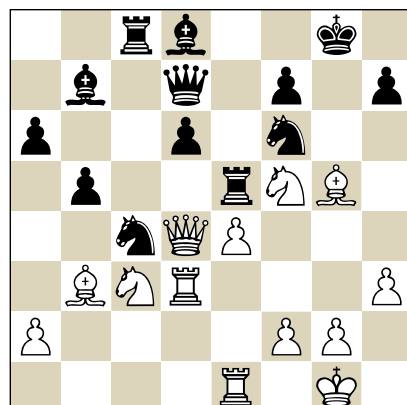
is bad due to 28. ♖d5 ♙xd5 29. exd5 ♖a5 30. d6!, and wins) 28. axb5 axb5 29. ♖xb5 ♖d3 30. ♙e2 ♖c1 31. ♙xc4 ♙xc4 32. ♙d2!, and now, after 32... ♖b3 33. ♙b2 ♖xd4 34. ♖d6! ♙c1+ 35. ♖h2 ♙c8 36. ♙b8 g5 37. ♖xc8 ♖g7 38. ♖e7 ♖f6 39. ♖d5+ ♖e5 40. ♙e8+ ♖e6 41. f3 f5 42. exf5 ♖xf5, Black should be able to hold this endgame eventually;



21. ♖xg7!
The only way.

21... ♙e5
Or 21... ♖xg7 22. ♙xf6+ ♙xf6 23. ♙g3+ ♖f8 24. ♙xf6 ♙e6 25. ♙h4 and White wins.

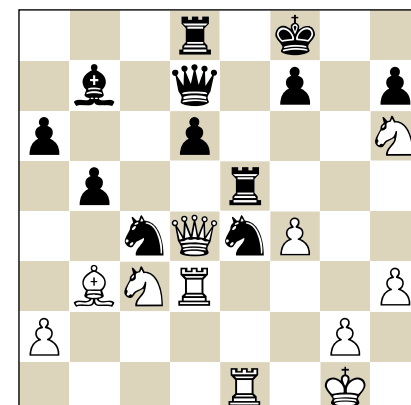
22. ♖f5!
Other lines are less convincing.



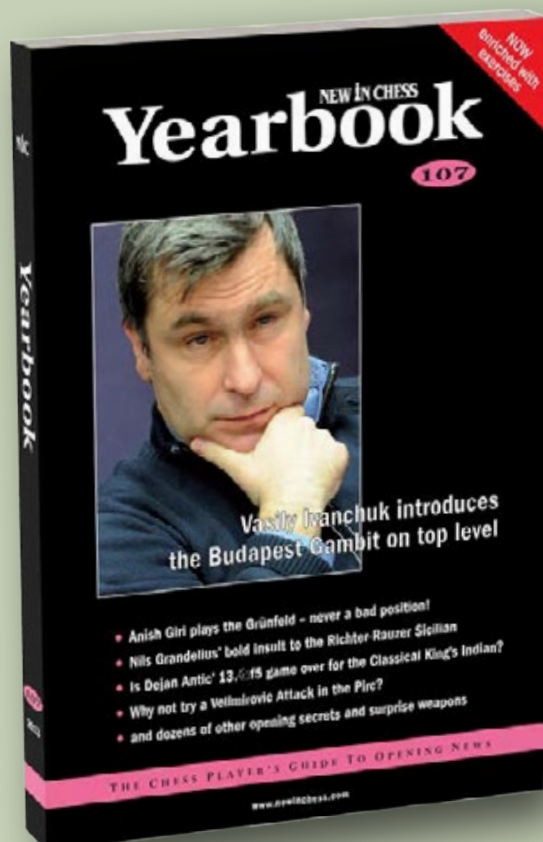
22... ♖xe4
In case of 22... ♙b6 the main idea is that after 23. ♙xf6 ♙xd4 24. ♙g3+ ♖f8 25. ♙g7+ ♖e8 26. ♙xe5 Black has to give up his extra queen and go into

a lost endgame an exchange down: 26... ♙xf5 27. exf5 dxe5 28. ♖e2! ♙c5 29. ♙g8+ ♙f8 30. ♙xc4 ♙xc4 31. ♖g3 f6 32. ♖h5 ♖f7 33. ♙h8, and Black is lost.

23. ♖h6+ ♖f8 24. ♙xd8 ♙xd8 25. f4



White eliminates the key defender of the black position, the rook on e5, after which he gains a decisive material advantage.
Black resigned.



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- Can White play the Velimirovic Attack also against the Pirc Defence?
- Can White play the Poisoned Pawn also against the Caro-Kann Defence?
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NOTES BY

Fabiano Caruana

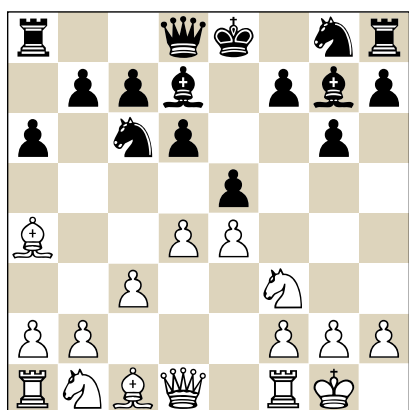
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Fabiano Caruana

Vassily Ivanchuk

Thessaloniki 2013 (2)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 d6 Vassily is famous for his ability to play nearly any opening system.
5.c3 g6 6.d4 ♙d7 7.0-0 ♙g7



8.h3

Not the most common move, but a very interesting one. I'm waiting to see where Black places his knight (f6 or e7) to decide on my own set-up.

Another critical continuation is 8.d5 ♘ce7 9.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 10.c4, with a kind of King's Indian position.

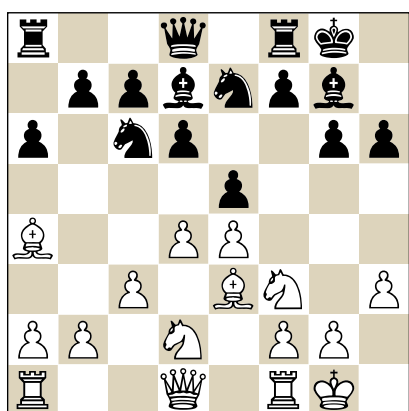
8...h6!?

A move I hadn't expected. Black is also waiting! However, now I have time to develop my pieces harmoniously.

9.♙e3 ♘ge7

After 9...♘f6 10.♘bd2, Black no longer has ...♘g4.

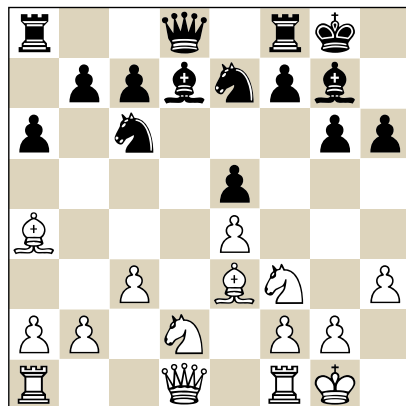
10.♘bd2 0-0



11.dxe5

I enjoy playing this symmetrical structure in which the bishop is misplaced on g7.

11...dxe5

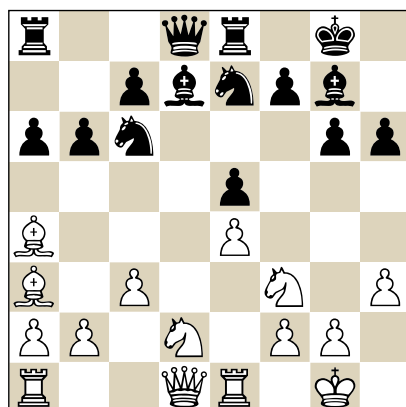


12.♙c5 I'm not sure if this move is strictly necessary.

I saw a variation like 12.b4 f5 13.♙b3+ ♙h7 14.a4 b6!, with the strong threat of ...f4, and got a bit scared.

A simple move like 12.♙c2 also made a lot of sense.

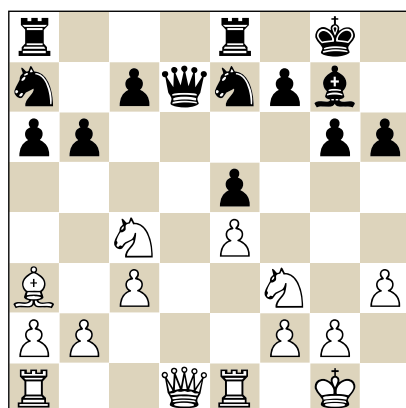
12...♙e8 13.♙e1 b6 14.♙a3



14...♘a7

Black has to release the tension at some point. The trade of bishops is positionally desirable for White, but my problem now is that the bishop on a3 is short of squares.

15.♙xd7 ♙xd7 16.♘c4

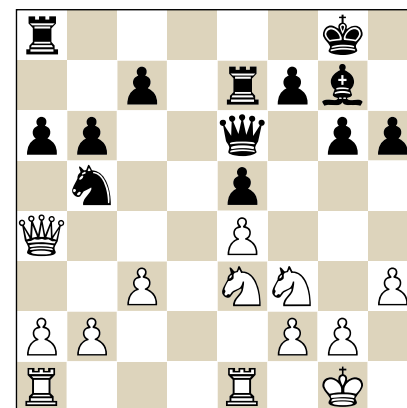


16...♙e6

This looks a bit inaccurate. The end-game offered Black more chances for equality.

After 16...♙xd1 17.♙axd1 ♘ec6 everything is great for White except the bishop on a3. I have to retreat with 18. b3 ♘b5 19.♙b2, and I may still have a small edge, but it's not much.

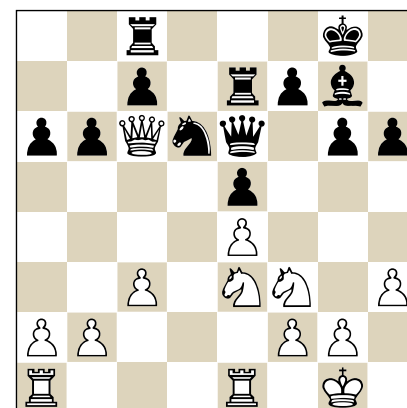
17.♘e3 ♘b5 18.♙xe7 ♙xe7 19.♙a4



Now I'm really pressing Black. The a6-pawn and the c6- and d5-squares are huge weaknesses.

19...♘d6 20.♙c6 ♙c8

After 20...♙d8 21.♘d5 ♙ed7 I was planning to grab the c7-pawn, but the machine is convinced Black will get compensation: 22.♘xc7 ♙c4! 23.♙xc4 ♘xc4 24.♘xa6 ♘xb2 25. ♘b4 ♘d3, and maybe Black will be able to hold.



21.♙ad1

A very strong move was 21.a4!, and Black has to fix his queenside with 21...a5, which is of course a great achievement for White.

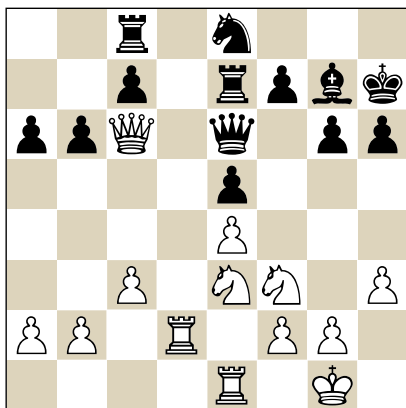
21...♙h7 22.♙d2 ♘e8

I hadn't seen this move in advance, and now I saw a very attractive possi-

Thessaloniki

bility to sacrifice the exchange. I was worried I might be overestimating my chances, but in the end I just couldn't resist.

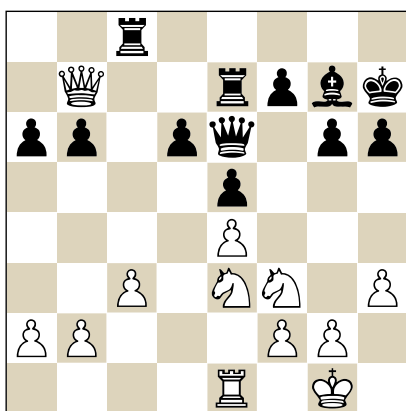
Black could have tried something like 22... ♖d7 instead, when his position is still not so bad.



23. ♖b7 ♘d6 24. ♖xd6!

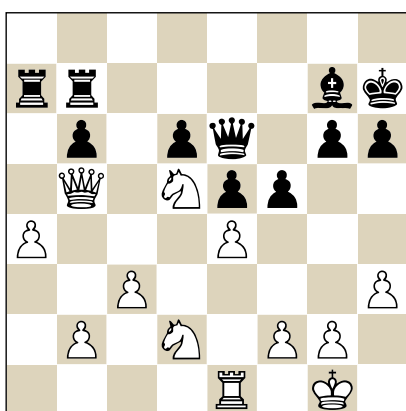
24. ♖xa6? ♘xe4 is very bad for me.

24...cxd6



25. ♖xa6 For the exchange, I get a tremendous light-square blockade and a lot of juicy squares for my knights. Black's position might objectively be defensible, but it's a difficult task.

25...♖cc7 26. ♘d5 ♖a7 27. ♖b5 ♖eb7 28. a4 f5 29. ♘d2



29... ♖f6

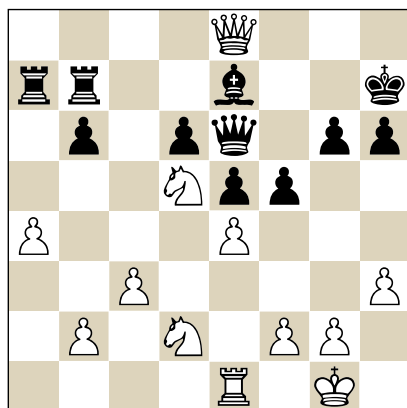


Fabiano Caruana and his coach Vladimir Chuchelov had good reason to be satisfied.

After 29...fxe4 I had planned 30.c4!, and next ♘xe4, with an enormous advantage.

30. ♖e8!? Maybe not necessary, but quite a pretty move, and again I couldn't resist.

30... ♖e7



31.c4 I was getting low on time and wanted to establish a full blockade, but it turned out I needed the c4-square for my knight!

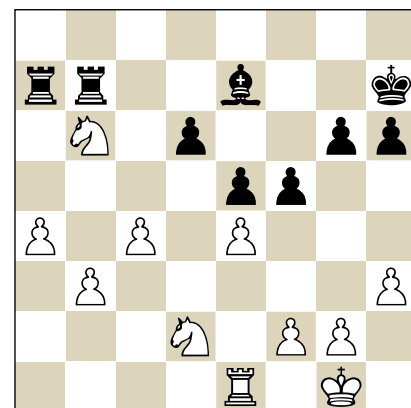
31.b3! was a very cool move. Black is nearly busted. I'm threatening ♘c4 at an ideal moment, and as soon as Black takes on e4 I play c4: 31...fxe4 32.c4! – only now – and next ♘xe4 leaves Black in a desperate situation.

31... ♖g8 32. ♖c6 ♖d8 33. b3 ♖d7 At some point Black will be forced to trade queens.

34. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 35. ♘xb6

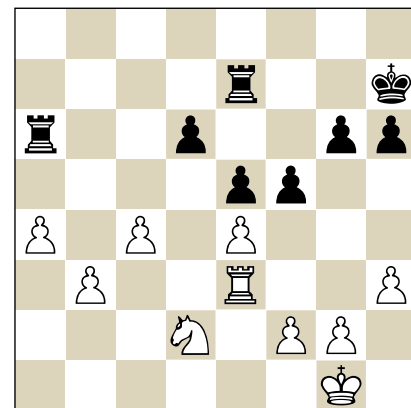
I was sad to give up my knight on d5, but it's time to cash in.

35... ♖db7

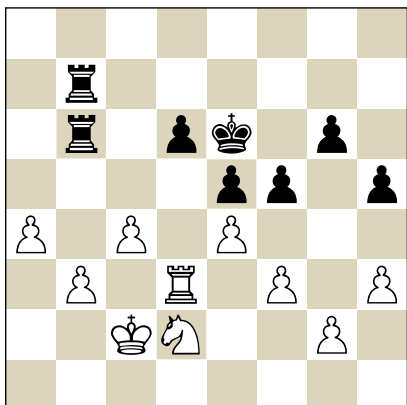


36. ♘c8 ♖a6 37. ♘xe7 ♖xe7 38. ♖e3

In this endgame Black's rooks are pretty ineffective. I'm just going to bring my king round to c3 and start advancing my queenside.



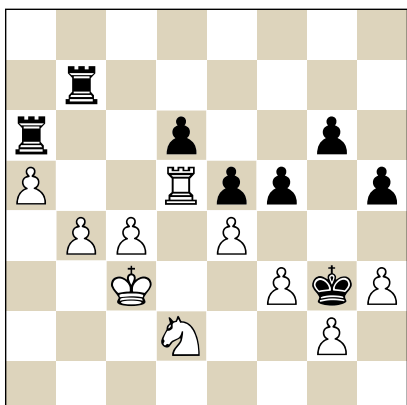
38...♔g7 39.♖d3 ♜b7 40.♔f1
♜ab6 41.♔e2 ♔f6 42.♔d1 ♔e6
43.♔c2 h5 44.f3



44...♔f6

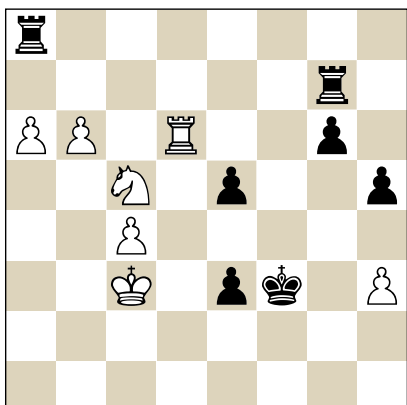
This is the final mistake, but it might already be lost for Black. I can't see a way to stop the gradual advance of White's pawns.

45.♔c3 ♜a6 46.♖d5 ♔g5 47.a5
♔f4 48.b4 ♔g3



My kingside is falling, but my a- and b- pawns are starting to run.

49.♘b3 ♔xg2 50.b5 ♜a8 51.
♜xd6 ♔xf3 52.a6 ♜g7 53.♘c5
fxe4 54.b6 e3



55.♜f6+ Black resigned.



NOTES BY

Jan Timman

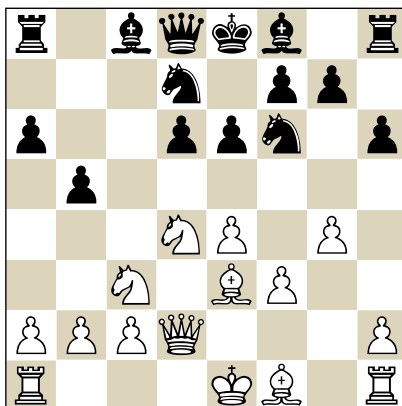
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Alexander Morozevich

Hikaru Nakamura

Thessaloniki 2013 (4)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.
♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e6 6.♙e3 a6 7.
f3 b5 8.♜d2 ♘bd7 9.g4 h6

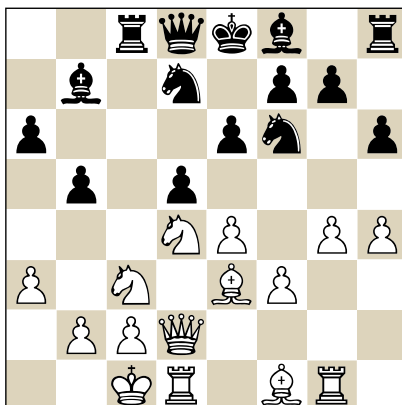


10.a3

An understandable move, but not the main line. White wants to prevent the further advance of the black b-pawn, but in doing so he gives Black the time for the thematic pawn push ...d6-d5. This is why the text is rarely played at the highest level. There are two rapid games from Leko in which it got him nowhere.

The critical move is 10.♙d3. Morozevich probably wanted to sidestep the large amount of theory around that move and start a sharp Sicilian battle in a different way, a plan that was clearly successful.

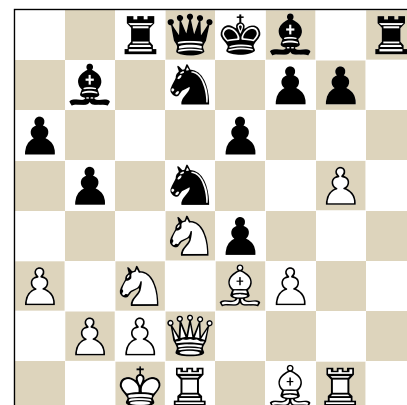
10...♙b7 11.0-0-0 ♜c8 12.h4 d5
13.♜g1



13...dxe4

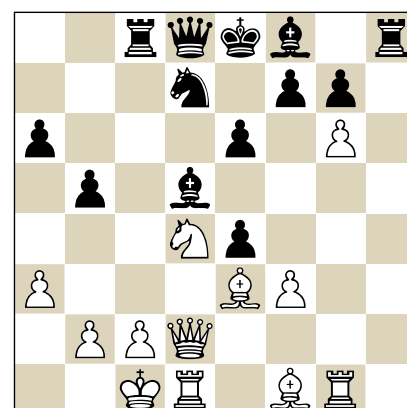
Without a doubt this is the best continuation. After 13...e5 White could have made a very promising piece sacrifice: 14.g5! hxg5 15.hxg5 exd4 16.♙xd4 ♘h5 17.♜h1!, and the pin on the h-file is highly annoying for Black.

14.g5 hxg5 15.hxg5 ♘d5



16.♘xd5 ♙xd5 17.g6

White must say B. And meanwhile Morozevich has the sharp battle he wanted, although he is certainly not better.



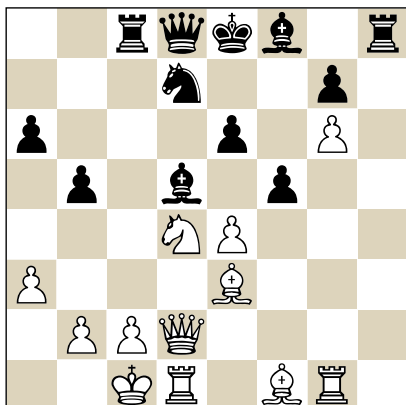
17...f5

Afterwards Morozevich observed that Black could also have captured on f3. Although this is correct in itself, Black would have had to pull out all the stops to prevent himself from getting mated after 17...exf3 18.gxf7+ ♔xf7 19.♘xf3 ♙xf3 20.♜f2 ♜f6 21.♜xd7+ ♔e8 22.♙g5!, when the only way to scrape through would be 22...♙c5 23.♜d2 ♜f8.

Stronger than the text, however, was 17...f6!, which required very precise calculation. After 18.fxe4 ♙xe4 19.♘xe6 ♙xc2! 20.♘xd8 ♙e4+! 21.♜c3

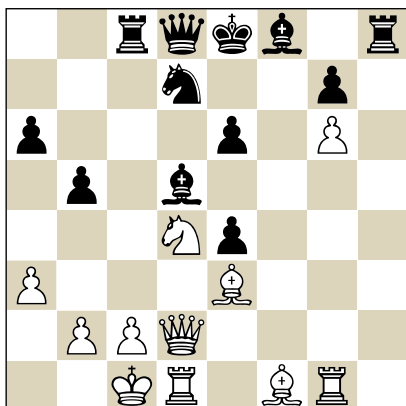
♖xc3+ 22.bxc3 ♙xa3+ 23.♔d2 ♖xd8
Black has an excellent position.

18.fxe4



18...fxe4

Morozevich had also expected 18... ♙xe4 here, when he can capture on e6 with slightly better prospects than in the above-mentioned variation: the black f-pawn is better placed on f6 than on f5. But White wanted to continue in gambit style with 19. ♙g2 ♘c5 20. ♙xe4 ♖xe4 21. ♖e2 ♖d5 22. ♖b1. This sharp position is probably dynamically balanced.



19.♖b1

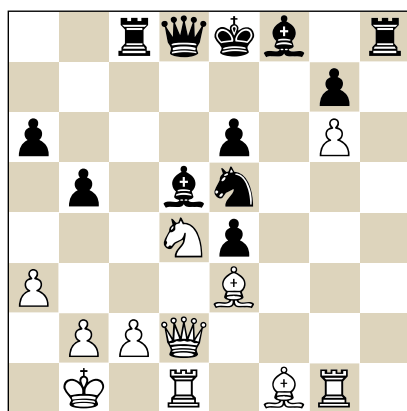
A standard move in the Sicilian. But the position is so charged that it needed a more radical approach. White should have tried to break open the queenside with 19.a4!, when 19...bxa4 20. ♙xa6 would have given him dangerous attacking chances. This is why Black should continue the fight for the initiative with 19... ♖c7, although White retains his advantage after 20.axb5 ♖h2 21. ♖g2 ♖xg2 22. ♙xg2 ♗e5 23. ♙f1!.

19...♗e5

Now Black has fully-fledged counterplay.



One of the most entertaining games was the draw between Alexander Morozevich and Hikaru Nakamura, 'a really fantastic, crazy game'.



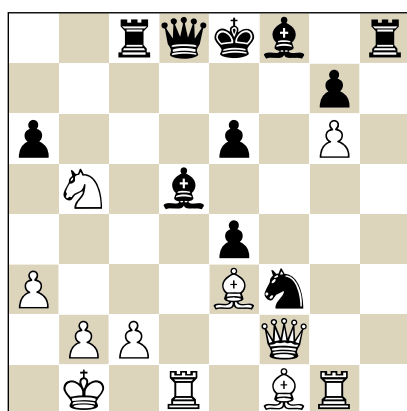
20.♗xb5

This is the piece sacrifice White had been gunning for. But Black is not forced to accept it.

20...♗f3!

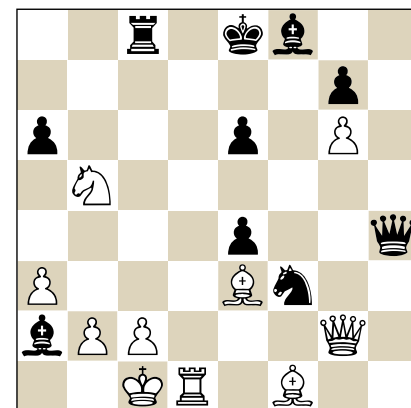
An excellent response from Nakamura. The knight has a perfect foothold on f3. After 20...axb5 21. ♙xb5+ ♙c6 22. ♙xc6+ ♗xc6 23. ♖g2!, followed by 24. ♖xe4, White would have had his way.

21.♖f2



21...♖f6

But now Nakamura weakens his grip on the white position. Morozevich was rightly afraid of 21... ♖h2!, with the point 22. ♖g2 ♖xg2 23. ♖xg2 ♙a2+!, and the white king is forced to c1. The position remains complex. Morozevich based his calculations mainly on the position after 24. ♖c1 ♖a5, but the black queen is better off going the other way: 24... ♖h4!,

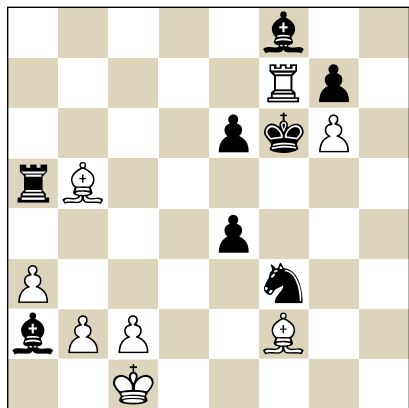


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

when White has nothing better than to offer a queen swap with 25. ♖f2. Black can then swap the queens and accept the piece sacrifice on b5 anyway. But that's not all. There is a long and fascinating line in which White continuously keeps his opponent off-balance with little pinpricks to prevent him from converting his material advantage.

This is how it goes: 25. ♖f2 ♖xf2 26. ♙xf2 axb5 27. ♙xb5+ ♖e7 28. ♙a6

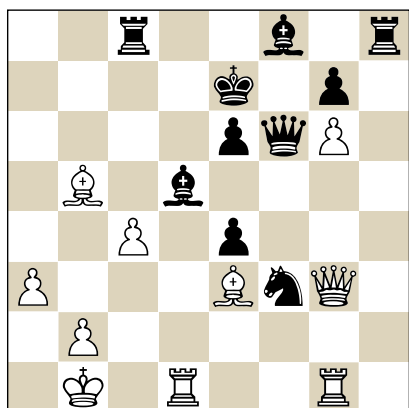
♖c6 29. ♘b7 ♗c4 30. ♘a6 ♗a4 31. ♘b5 ♗a5 32. ♗d7+ ♔f6 33. ♗f7+



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

33...♗g5! (not 33...♗xg6 in view of 34. ♘e8!, and suddenly White is calling the shots) 34. ♘e3+ ♔h5! 35. a4 ♗a8 36. ♘c6 ♗d8, and Black has kept his piece. But because his pieces are scattered all over the board, he will find it hard to convert his material plus.

22. ♗g3 axb5 23. ♘xb5+ ♔e7 24. c4

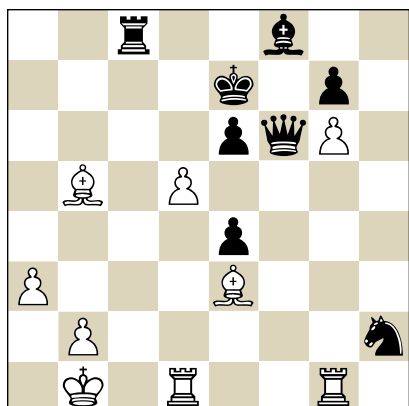


The position is dynamically balanced.

24...♗h2 25. ♗xh2!

Very alert. White sacrifices his queen in order to reinforce his attack.

25...♗xh2 26. cxd5



26...♗f5!

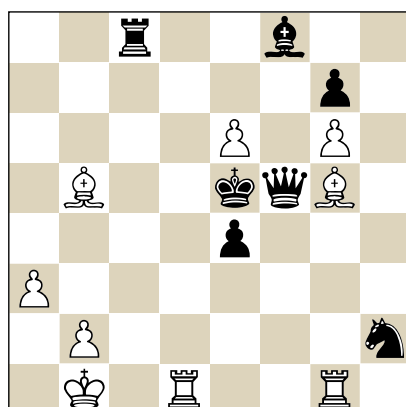
The only square for the queen. White must keep control of square g5.

27. ♘g5+

Both players are handling this stage of the game excellently. Insufficient was 27. d6+ in view of 27...♗f6 28. d7 ♗d8 29. ♘b6 ♘e7, and White has run out of options.

27...♗d6 28. dxe6+ ♔e5

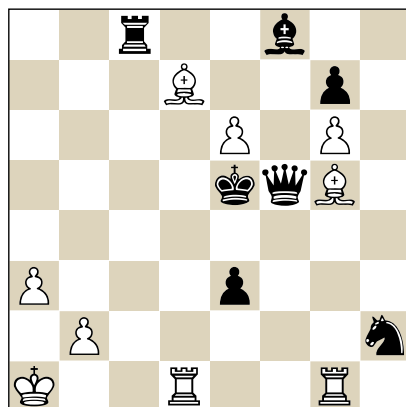
Nakamura decides to take his king into the open. 28...♗c7 was another possibility.



29. ♘d7

Inaccurate. White should have gone 29. e7! first, after which he can meet 29...e3+ with 30. ♘d3, leaving Black no choice but to take the pawn. After 29...♘xe7 30. ♘d7 ♗f8 31. ♘xe7 ♗xe7 32. ♘xc8 the endgame is approximately equal, although the fight is not quite over yet.

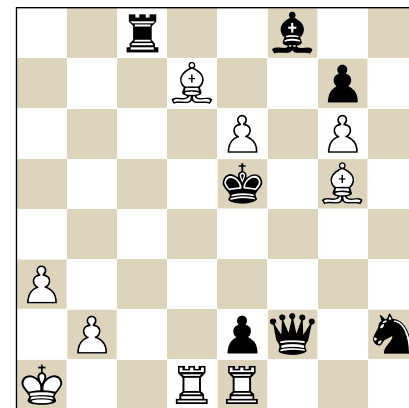
29...e3+ 30. ♔a1



30...♘xa3

After all his adventures Nakamura decides to go for a draw by repetition. With 30...e2 he could have launched a dangerous winning attempt. White must play 31. ♗ge1, after which Black, in his turn, is forced to play 31...♗f2.

White then has two possibilities:



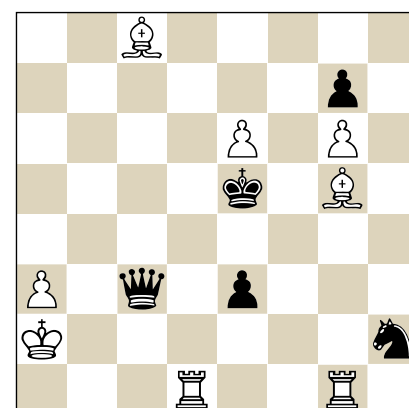
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 32. ♘xc8 ♗f3 33. ♘h4 ♗xe1 34. ♗d5+! (the Prokes manoeuvre, but it won't save White here) 34...♗xd5 35. ♘xf2 ♗d3 36. ♘g3 ♘d6 37. ♘h4 ♘e7 38. ♘g3 e1 ♗+ 39. ♘xe1 ♗xe1, and Black should be able to win in the long run.

B) 32. ♘h4!. The first of a series of 'only moves'. Black must first withdraw his queen in order to keep his e-pawn: 32...♗e3 33. ♘xc8 exd1 ♗+ 34. ♗xd1 ♗f4 35. ♗e1 ♗d2 36. ♘b7! ♗f5 37. ♘c8! ♘e7 38. ♗h1! ♗d8 39. ♘xe7 ♗xc8 40. ♗xh2 ♗xe6, and now that the smoke has cleared, a drawn position remains.

In time-trouble all those study-like moves would have been hard to find.

31. ♘xc8 ♗c2 32. bxa3 ♗c3+ 33. ♔a2



33...♗xc8

Black can safely capture this bishop on the way. The perpetual check remains in the position.

34. e7 ♗c2+ 35. ♔a1 ♗c3+ 36. ♔a2 ♗c2+ 37. ♔a1 ♗c3+ 38. ♔a2 ♗c2+

And a draw. A great fight. ■

Total Chess with the ‘Clueless Genius’

Anish Giri

Some time ago I was given the wise advice that in order to progress as a chess player it is essential to play matches against strong opponents. As it wasn't so easy to arrange such meetings, that well-meant advice seemed to be evaporating into

thin air, when suddenly I received a very attractive proposal from the prestigious festival in León: a total chess match against Vassily Ivanchuk himself, a world star who has been fighting for the very highest goals in chess for more than two decades.

T

The ‘Ciudad de León’ has a rich tradition, our match being the 26th edition. The organizers have always been experimental with the format and stayed very conservative when it came to the participants – those were always the very best of the world. Perhaps the tournament is best known for hosting the first so-called ‘advanced chess’, where humans have the assistance of engines, between Garry Kasparov and Veselin Topalov in 1998. That was in the past and these days it sounds like a rather rudimentary format. Nevertheless, the organizers haven't relinquished their creative attempts and from ‘advanced chess’ they have moved on to the newly invented ‘total chess’, which means a match that is subdivided into three matches with



Let the games begin. Vassily Ivanchuk (clean-shaven, cap slightly askew) looks ready for three days of Total Chess with Anish Giri (clean-shaven, no cap).

different time-controls: semi-rapid, rapid and blitz. The event was to be played in three days and the winner would be the player who had won the most mini-matches (with an Armageddon final in case of a tie).

My opponent, Vassily Ivanchuk, is known to be a genius and an unpredictable one at that. On the official website he was introduced as 'The Clueless Genius', although the 'clueless' bit must be attributed to my Google translate, which knows my handicap in the Spanish language and does the translating for me. By the way, this handicap doesn't help you in Spain. Only those who really pity you very much start speaking English, while the largest percentage of the population sticks to their own native tongue. Now



to avoid the impression that Google translate was rooting for me, I will also give you the honorific with which it introduced me: 'The Beardless Killer'. Nice to meet you. For a while I had the idea not to shave before the event, but finally I decided to keep my cool. Which created an opportunity for my opponent, who did refuse to shave for the match, making it clear that I indeed was that Beardless One.

Before starting the sensible part of the report I should also mention the new fashion, if you hadn't noticed already – the cap thing. In fact, FIDE decided to stimulate it (we know how fashion works!) by warning the players that in the future wearing a cap will be prohibited. However, for the moment the cap is still very hip and

if it wasn't for the old Russian saying that wearing a hat inside a building is an insult to those around you, I would certainly get one myself.

Before travelling to León I decided to take the match seriously. First of all because this was my first event after finishing school and secondly because it is much more fun to take things seriously anyway. While I didn't want to put much emphasis on opening preparation (you hardly can do that anyway if you play Ivanchuk), I decided to focus on my form and spent most of my time playing online blitz and taking care of my physical shape. I may add that I picked up those old habits when I was trying to find a way to relieve the exam-stress (or boredom) that haunted me in May.

It was hard for me to know what to expect from Vassily. In his last event, which he finished just a couple of days earlier, the Grand Prix tournament in Thessaloniki, he lost most of his games. Yet, as he usually does, he managed to strike back at the very end by winning his last game. This trick of ending a disaster with a bang (also known as the Carlsen-Kramnik-trick, named after the dramatic last rounds of the Candidates' in London, where Vassily, despite an otherwise terrible tournament, managed to beat both leaders) would finally also make a showing in

our match... but let's take it one step at a time.

At the drawing of lots I picked three whites, which meant that I'd start the two-game semi-rapid match, the four-game rapid match and the 10-game blitz match with the white pieces. I saw no reason not to move my king's pawn, especially since the organizers had invited the famous Spanish writer Arturo Perez-Reverte to execute the first move, and I didn't want him to doubt my opening expertise. In general I think that in order to popularize our game we should all agree to play 1.e4. It gives the game a romantic touch, apart from the fact that it's simply the best move, as I was recently told by a former World Champion.

Anyhow, Ivanchuk replied 1...e5 and a Spanish Opening appeared on the board. His rather passive handling of the opening, together with suspect knight manoeuvres, ...h6, ...Nf7-g5, (with all due respect to this typical idea, it does stink) was fully compensated for by his speed of play and his confident appearance. One way or another I was in a state of trance, and before I knew it I ended up slightly, but clearly worse. Fortunately I managed to gather myself together and eventually we exchanged all the queenside pawns and a draw was agreed.

During the ensuing 10-minute

break I was philosophizing and trying to imagine how it would be to play the last decisive game in a world championship match and how interesting it is from a psychological point of view.

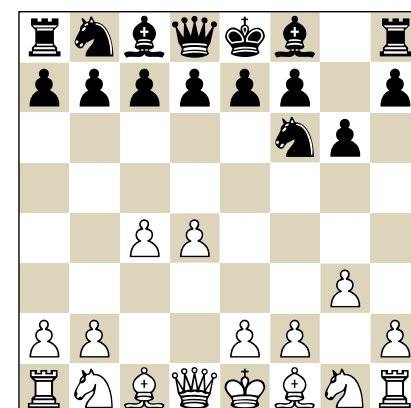
Well, if this had been the last game of my world championship match, I might have not gone for the Benoni, but in León it worked well.



NOTES BY
Anish Giri

Bl 9.15 – A62
Vassily Ivanchuk
Anish Giri
Leon 2013 (semi-rapid-2)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3

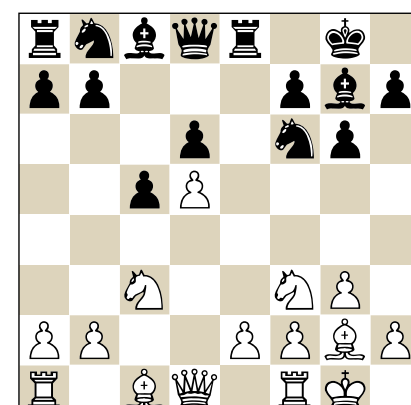


Also in blitz Vassily put an emphasis on this move. I have played many games with this set-up with both colours, so this didn't get me too worried.

3...Bg7 4.Bg2 c5 5.d5

Accepting my Benoni invitation. I didn't mind at all, having prepared some new ideas there, too.

5...0-0 6.Nc3 d6 7.Nf3 e6 8.0-0 exd5 9.cxd5 Re8

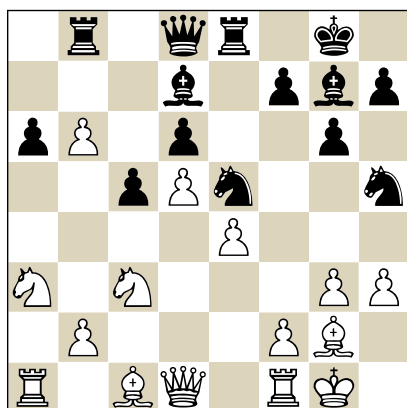


Watched by chief arbiter Joaquín Espejo and chief organizer Marcelino Sion, Spanish novelist Arturo Perez-Reverte executed the first move (1.e4!) in Game 1.



10. ♖f4

The fashionable move. The good old 10. ♖d2 is under question due to a relatively new idea, which I even managed to repeat in a rapid game against Le Quang in Beijing in 2011: 10. ♖d2 a6 11. a4 ♖bd7 12. h3 ♜b8 13. ♘c4 ♙e5 14. ♘a3 ♘h5 15. e4 ♙d7 16. a5 b5 17. axb6



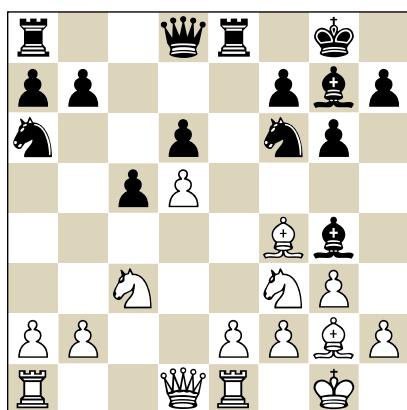
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

17... ♙b5!? etc. ½-½ (82) Le Quang Liem-Giri, Beijing 2011.

10... ♖a6 A move popularized by Gashimov. Black develops pieces, as simple as that.

11. ♜e1 In openings where the bishop stands on g2, White often plays very cautious chess. This move is pretty typical in the Benoni and may prove to be useful later on.

11... ♙g4



12. h3

Later in the blitz Vassily chose the logical push 12. e4, and we reached a typical Benoni position after 12... ♘h5!? (I was worried that the complications after 12... ♘d7 13. ♙xd6 ♜b6 may not favour Black) 13. ♙e3 ♘f6 14. h3 ♙xf3 15. ♙xf3 ♘d7. Here I was pretty happy with my position, but nevertheless the



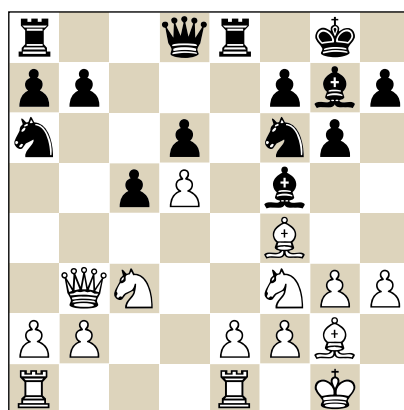
After the rapid games Vassily Ivanchuk (different cap, unshaven) explained his predicament to Leontxo Garcia: 'After an unhappy love affair you can take another woman. But there is only once chess and right now I don't like it. There is no solution to my problem.'

game took many strange and spectacular turns.

12... ♙f5!? So far everyone has automatically taken the knight, but during the game I remembered that this retreat is interesting as well. Having provoked h3, Black no longer has to fear ♘h4, and otherwise ... ♙e4 is a threat.

13. ♜b3

In case of 13. ♘h4 ♙e4 (13... ♙d7!? 14. ♙xd6 ♙xh3) 14. f3 ♘h5, Black is doing well due to the weakness of the h4-g3-f4 triangle.

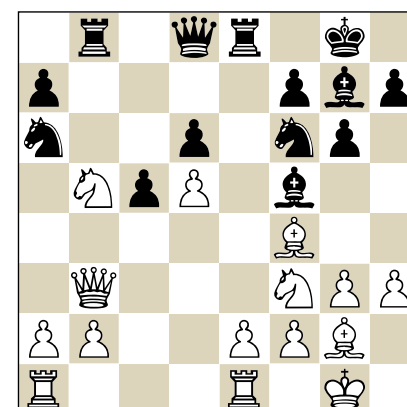


13... b5! A typical move, known since the game Grischuk-Gashimov, in which Vugar played this move in a similar position, as Grischuk went ♜b3 without h3. I couldn't really understand the difference, but after calculating (or, rather, trying to) for some 10 minutes I went for it anyway.

14. ♘xb5

Taking with the queen would allow 14... ♘b4, when Black has too many threats.

14... ♜b8



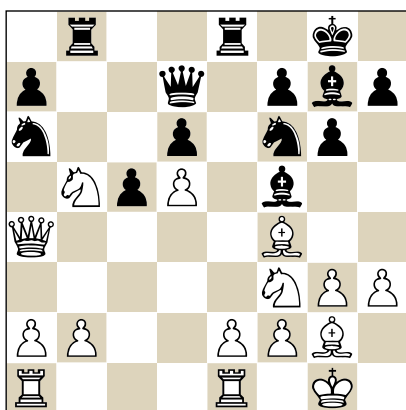
15. ♜a4 Played in analogy with the Grischuk game (where White by the way got into trouble).

Another option was the logical 15. a4, but there is also the crazy 15. ♘g5, advocated by the computer as the first choice. Eventually, it calms down and admits that the complications offer chances for both sides.

On 15. a4 Black plays 15... ♘c7!.

And after 15. ♘g5!? ♜d7 16. a4 h6 White can choose between 17. ♘f3, 17. e4, 17. ♙xd6 and even 17. ♘xf7, but in any case the position is messy and Black is doing fine.

15... ♜d7! I couldn't exactly figure out what White wanted, and since intuitively the position felt very good for Black I saw no reason to hesitate too much.



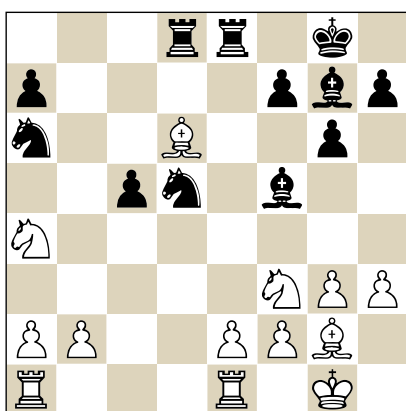
16. ♖c3 16. ♔xa6 ♙xb5 17. ♔xd6 ♙xd6 18. ♙xd6 ♘e4 19. ♙f4 ♙xb2 looks unclear, but White should be careful as the c-pawn is about to start marching.

16... ♙xa4 17. ♘xa4 ♘xd5

I also had other options, but suddenly I noticed that my next move looks very strong and again I went for it pretty fast.

18. ♙xd6 ♙bd8

Here my opponent somehow trusted my body language, although I must say that at some point I had already noticed that White has an escape.



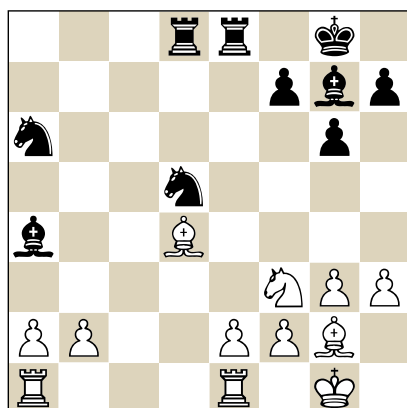
19. ♙xc5? I don't know whether such moves can be called a blunder. Basically my opponent saw my response, he just didn't believe there was anything else he could do.

However, he could have played 19.e4! ♙xe4 20. ♙xe4 ♙xe4 21. ♘xc5!, and it all works out for White: 21... ♙xb2 22. ♙e1 ♙xf3 23. ♙xf3 ♙xd6 24. ♘xa6 and it will be an easy draw, even though the computer shows off nicely with 24... ♘f4!

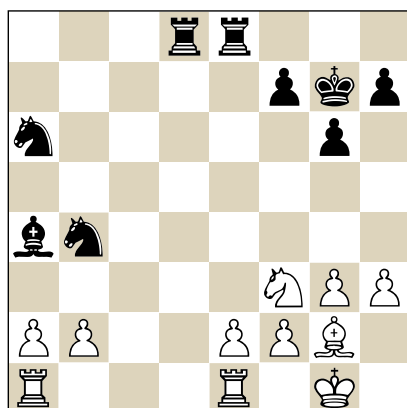
19... ♙d7 20. ♙xa7 ♙xa4 21. ♙d4

For a couple of seconds it seemed that White was about to consolidate, having

three pawns for the piece and thus excellent chances to escape. But it turned out that Black has one more resource:



21... ♙db4! I was very pleased to find this move. Now White simply can't save his pawns. **22. ♙xg7 ♙xg7**



And since the threat of ... ♘c2 causes White to lose his pawns, my opponent resigned. I can't say that such blunders shock me anymore these days; it's more the finally-it-happened-in-my-game-too-feeling. Nevertheless, it felt slightly confusing, on leaving the playing hall, to hear the puzzled chess lovers whispering to each other – 'eee-cuatro, ee-cuatro?!'

The press-conference, which was obligatory for both participants, wasn't attended by Vassily.

I was very motivated to win the match as early as the second day, and even though my Spanish experiment in Round 1 didn't go as planned, I again couldn't resist 1.e4. Ivanchuk repeated the Spanish, but this time he aimed for a more sensible set-up. I played a little passively and got no opening advantage whatsoever. Ivanchuk decided to punish me and took my not-so-poisoned a2-pawn. I was

'The press-conference, which was obligatory for both participants, wasn't attended by Vassily.'

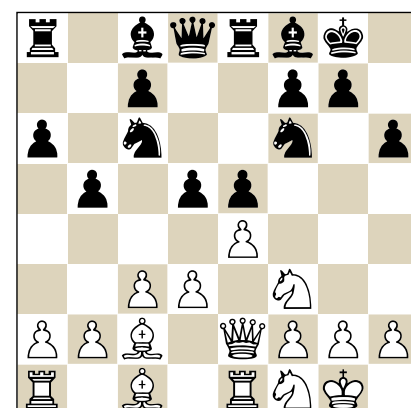
about to get a little nervous, but fortunately I found a very good move and won back the pawn. After that the more the fully concentrated Ivanchuk continued to ponder over his move, the more likely I considered him to walk into a cute trap, and he duly did.



NOTES BY
Anish Giri

RL 13.5 – C77
Anish Giri
Vassily Ivanchuk
Leon 2013 (rapid 1)

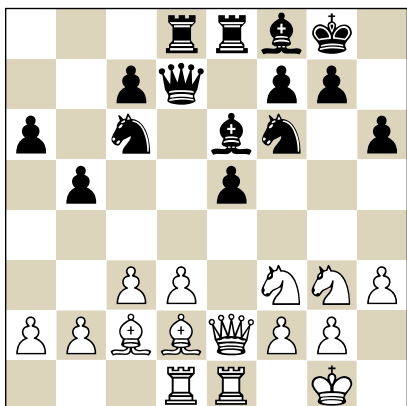
1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙b5 a6 4. ♙a4 ♘f6 5. 0-0 ♙e7 6. d3 d6 7. c3 0-0 8. ♘bd2 ♙e8 9. ♙e1 ♙f8 10. ♘f1 b5 11. ♙c2 d5 12. ♙e2 h6



13. exd5 ♙xd5 14. ♘g3 ♙g4 15. ♘e4 ♘h7 16. h3 ♙e6 17. ♘g3 ♘f6

18. ♖e3 ♜d7 19. ♖d2 ♜ad8 20. ♜ad1

I can't say I handled the opening in the best possible way, but I had not done anything particularly bad, so I had no reasons to really be worried about equalizing. Vassily, however, was determined to create something out of nothing; a dangerous strategy.



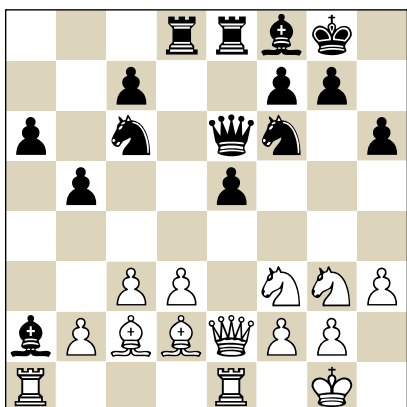
20... ♖xa2 In itself a dangerous move, but as it turns out Black can afford to snatch the poisoned pawn without getting his bishop trapped. Yet, in view of my next two moves, this move is by no means great.

21. ♜a1

Simple and strong. Now it seems that I win my pawn back.

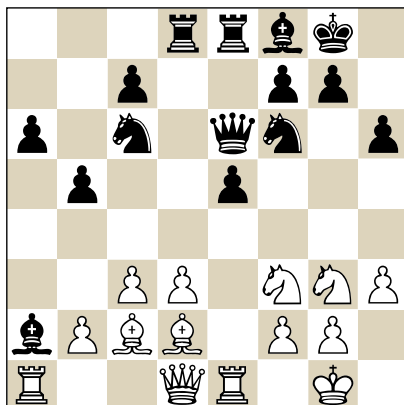
However, 21.b3? doesn't work for White: 21... ♜e6 (21...b4!?) 22.c4 e4! or even 22... ♘b4 first. White is just uncoordinated and the bishop on a2 will eventually come out, as White cannot keep the c4-pawn.

21... ♜e6!? Still trying to keep the pawn, and indeed, if not for my next move, I would be worse.



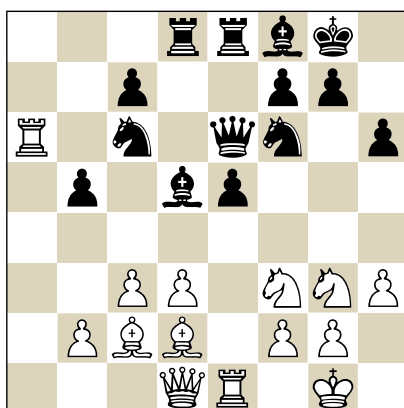
22. ♜d1! After a few seconds of panic when I saw 22.c4 bxc4!, I suddenly noticed this strong move. Now b3

cannot be stopped effectively. Black has one more trick, but I already saw that it wouldn't work.



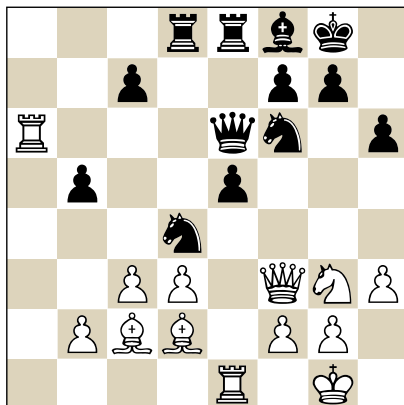
22... ♖d5 After the game Vassily was saying that he spent a lot of time calculating 22...b4, but as my intuition suggested to me, I am just winning material here: 23.b3 bxc3 24. ♖xc3 ♖b4 25. ♜xe5! ♘xe5 26. ♖xe5.

23. ♜xa6



23... ♖xf3?? I had seen this trick in advance and had serious hopes that my opponent would go for it.

24. ♜xf3 ♘d4



25. ♜b7! This move is pretty long and the hand has to reach very far, but as my opponent resigned upon seeing it, it was worth making it. My oppo-

nent had been focusing on the following line: 25.cxd4 ♜xa6 26.dxe5 ♘d7!, with the idea of 27.d4 ♘xe5!.

To have his revenge, Vassily opened with the king's pawn as well. After I went for the Sicilian, Ivanchuk's hand moved around a bit and finally touched the f2-pawn. Incidentally, a couple of weeks before this game I had played a friendly game with the black pieces, and when my opponent went for 2.f4 I played an interesting system – 2...d5! 3.exd5 ♘f6 4. ♖b5+ (so far the main moves), and here I decided to surprise my opponent and played ...♘bd7, which I had no idea about. After the logical c4 I went on to develop with ...g6!?, ...♖g7, etc., and quickly got a good position. After that game my opponent seemed impressed with this set-up and me, I forgot to check if it had been played before. Nevertheless, I decided to blitz it out against Chuky as well. Judging by his eye-brow movements, ...g6 is an unusual set-up, but the way he handled the position certainly didn't challenge it. Just when he was about to equalize, Ivanchuk miscalculated once again and the second game was also in the bag.

Frankly speaking, I began to feel a little bit awkward as the match started to go downhill for Vassily. I knew that a draw in the third game would secure the rapid match, but by this point there was absolutely nothing that could make me doubt the outcome, so I decided to just play for a win in the remaining two games.

It was quite interesting that I managed to mix up the move order in the Austrian Attack in the Pirc. I felt a bit stupid, as I know the subtleties in the deep variations of this fascinating opening (don't ask me why I have analysed it, I am a freak) and then basically mixed things up at the very first move. I decided to shake my head for a couple of seconds. This is also back in fashion in chess and, by the way, it is being popularized by the same people who stick to the cap-trend (Is

there a connection? An idea for future research). After the head-shake I went on blitzing out the remaining moves, and in just a couple of minutes the game was somehow drawn. The fact that between $\mp$ and a draw there were just two minutes suggested that Vassily was still very much struggling with his shape.

Trying to score a prestige goal in the fourth and final game Ivanchuk tried the Sokolsky Opening, 1.b4. I handled the opening and the mid-game pretty badly, yet the position was never too bad for me. At one point Vassily made an incredibly bad move and not too long after that I won this game as well.

I couldn't exactly follow the press conference, which was conducted in Spanish. All I know was that Vassily, who was caught by the organizers in order not to let him escape this time, said something very interesting because there was a lot of applause for him.

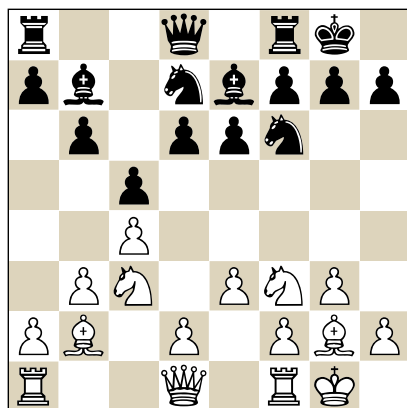
The third day I started a little too cockily, first of all forgetting the golden rule that one has to play 1.e4, and secondly moving all pieces forward without a single thought. As hard as it was to imagine after the first two days, I was very cruelly punished.



NOTES BY
Anish Giri

EO 40.8 – A30
Anish Giri
Vassily Ivanchuk
Leon 2013 (blitz-1)

1.b3? b6! 2.♘b2 ♘b7 3.♘f3 e6 4. e3 ♘f6 5.g3 ♘e7 6.♘g2 0-0 7.0-0 c5 8.c4 d6 9.♘c3 ♘bd7

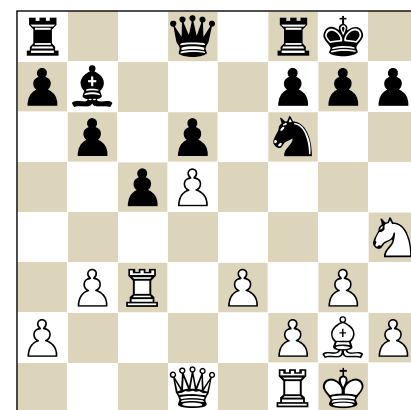


We have finally transposed to some line in which White is trying to avoid the Queen's Indian Defence and Black doesn't mind a Hedgehog set-up.

10.d4 ♘e4 11.d5

The most principled move, but obviously a risky decision.

11...♘xc3 12.♘xc3 exd5 13. cxd5 ♘f6 14.♗c1 ♘xc3 15.♗xc3 ♘f6 16.♘h4

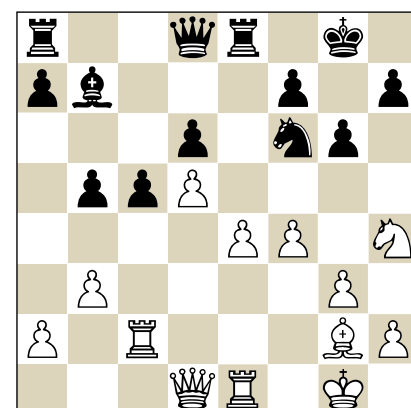


So far I think I made all my moves without thinking. Basically it all kind of makes sense. I am aiming to push e4 and f4.

16...♗e8 17.♗e1 ♘e4

This is just wasting time.

18.♗c4 ♘f6 19.e4 g6 20.f4 b5 21.♗c2



21...♗b6! Here I could obviously have played a normal move like

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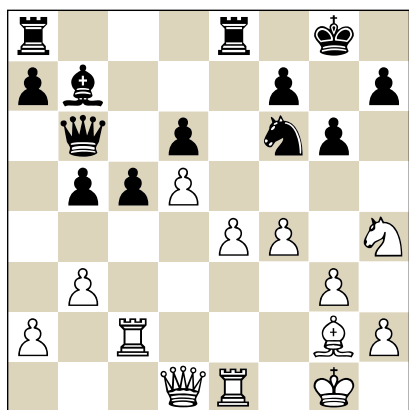
NEW!

NEW!



Anish Giri (clean-shaven, still no cap) and Vassily Ivanchuk (clean-shaven, same cap) with the trophies for the 'Campeón' and the 'Sub-Campeón'.

22. ♖h1 and tried to prepare the advance of my pawns. I must say the position looks a little dangerous for Black without his Benoni bishop, but who knows.

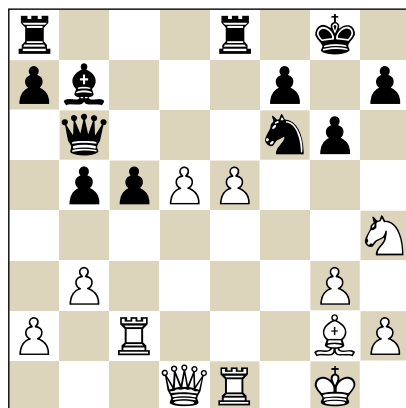


22.e5?

I spent maybe five seconds on this move, as somehow I felt the helplessness of my opponent. His ... ♗e4-f6 tempo loss felt like a justification for such aggressive measures.

I saw 23... ♗xd5, but first of all I saw that my king doesn't have to be on the long diagonal, which is definitely a good thing for White, and secondly I was thinking that if something happened, I would find some trick related to the f7-pawn anyway.

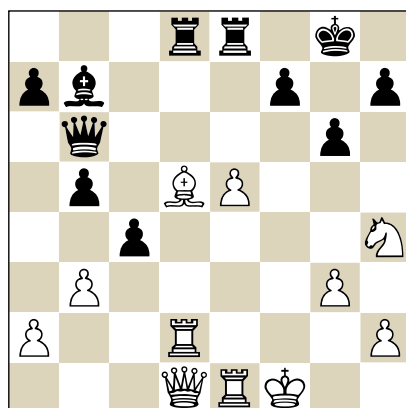
22...dxe5 23.fxe5



23... ♗xd5!

Unfortunately for me, Black is kind of forced to play this move.

24. ♗xd5 ♖ad8 25. ♖d2 c4+ 26. ♖f1



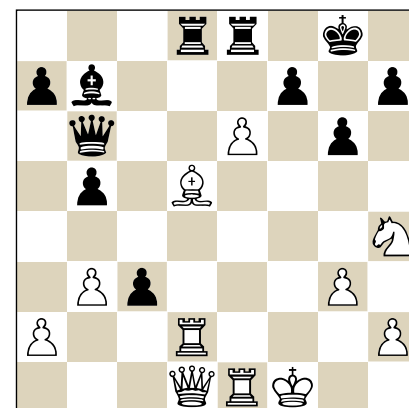
26... ♖c3!

26... ♖xd5? was the move I saw when I played 22.e5, and here it is indeed not dangerous: 27. ♖xd5 ♖c6 28.

♖d8! ♖h1+ 29. ♖f2 ♖xh2+ 30. ♖e3! ♖xg3+ 31. ♗f3 and Black is lost.

27.e6!

In a wave of panic I found this resource, and although I felt that my position was probably bad, looking at my confused opponent and having in mind that I had beaten him 5-1 in the past two days I nevertheless remained optimistic.

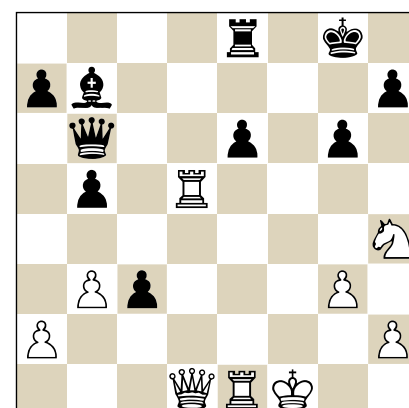


27... ♖xd5!

Practically speaking the most dangerous try.

The following variation demonstrates the resources of the position: 27... fxe6 28. ♗xe6+ ♖h8 29. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 30. ♖e2 ♖f8+ 31. ♗f5! and White holds.

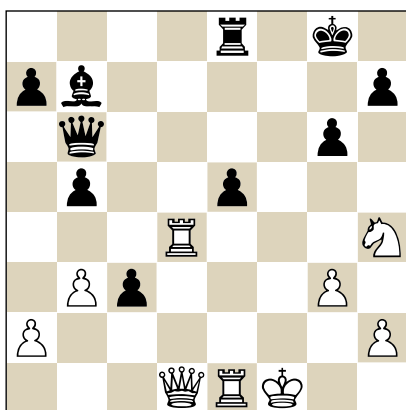
28. ♖xd5 fxe6 Now I saw no defence, and seeing some ghosts I decided to try to confuse my opponent by blocking the f-file.



29. ♖d4?

29. ♖d3! felt unreal, but with a series of only moves White in fact holds the position: 29... c2 30. ♖e2! ♖f8+ (30... ♖c6 looks devastating, but 31. ♖e3! saves the day) 31. ♗f3 e5 32. ♖f2.

29...e5



30. ♖f5?

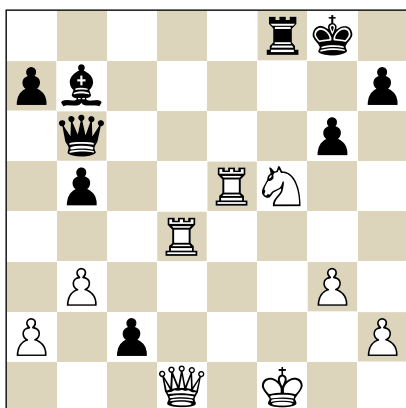
Spectacular and confusing, but no more than that.

30. ♖d3 was the last try and White is still very much in the game. I felt that it was lost, but I must say I should have realized that the text-move is way too hopeless anyway.

30... ♖f8 30... ♖c6 also wins.

30... gxf5? was what I could hope for, when White manages to defend with 31. ♖d6!.

31. ♖xe5 c2!



Now it's all over.

32. ♖xc2 ♖xd4 33. ♖e8 ♖a1+ 34. ♖f2 ♖xe8 35. ♖h6+ ♖h8 36. ♖f7+ ♖g7 37. ♖c7

And here Vassily jumped from his chair and shouted: **37... ♖e1 Mate!**

The second game gave me hopes, as I saw that Vassily was still blundering, but in the third one I gave it away. My opponent developed very easily and the game seemed to be fizzling out to a draw with the c-file wide open for rooks to be exchanged. Still I managed to twist the situation on the board with some aggressive and inventive decisions. When my opponent

‘And here Vassily jumped from his chair and shouted: **37... ♖e1 Mate!**’

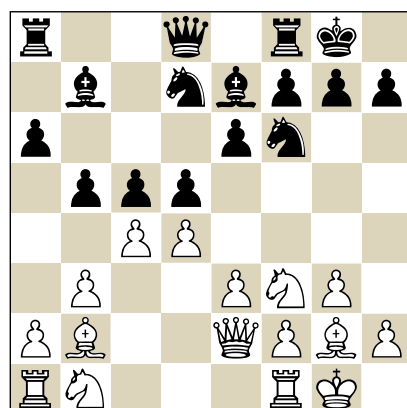
had just a few seconds (with a small increment per move) left, I sacrificed a knight and the position felt, if not winning objectively, then certainly practically. I basically thought it was already over, but then weird things started to happen...



NOTES BY
Anish Giri

RE 20.8 – A05
Anish Giri
Vassily Ivanchuk
Leon 2013 (blitz-3)

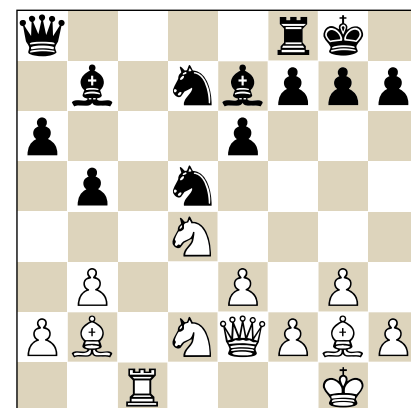
1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. g3 b5 3. e3 a6 4. ♖g2
♖b7 5. 0-0 e6 6. b3 ♖e7 7. ♖b2 0-0
8. ♖e2 c5 9. c4 d5 10. d4 ♖bd7



11. cxd5 ♖xd5 12. ♖bd2 ♖c8 13.
♖ac1 cxd4 14. ♖xd4 ♖xc1 15.
♖xc1 ♖a8

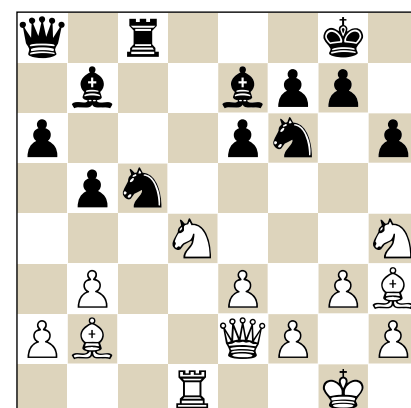
From here I started my attempts to create chaos, as I already had much more time on my clock and didn't

want to remain the runner-up in the blitz match.



16. ♖h3!? ♖5f6 17. ♖2f3 ♖c8 18.
♖d1!? h6 19. ♖h4!? ♖c5?

Much better was 19... ♖f8!, and I would probably have had to admit that my attempts had failed and return to the drawing track with 20. ♖g2.

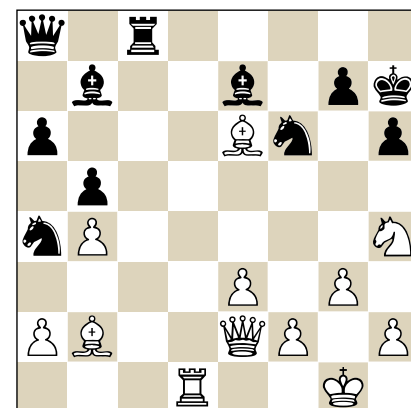


20. b4!

Vassily had missed this move. Now I can finally create a real attack.

20... ♖a4 21. ♖xe6! fxe6 22.
♖xe6+ ♖h7

At this point I had used just a couple of seconds and didn't double-check my calculations.



23. ♖d3+??

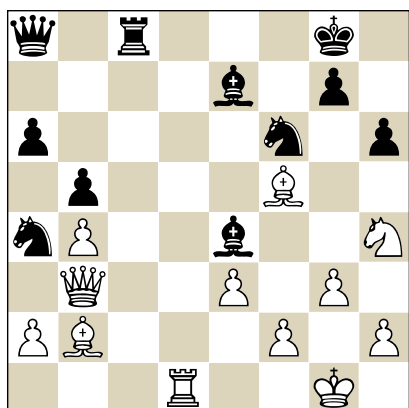
Any logical move except this one

would have yielded White a huge attack. A couple of ideas are:

- 23. ♖f5+ ♔g8 24. ♘g6.
- 23. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 24. ♔g4.
- 23. ♖a1!

As much as I admire my opponent's skills in time-trouble, I do not think he would have managed to put up any resistance in such a position with just 10 seconds on the clock.

23... ♖e4 24. ♖f5+ ♔g8 25. ♔b3+

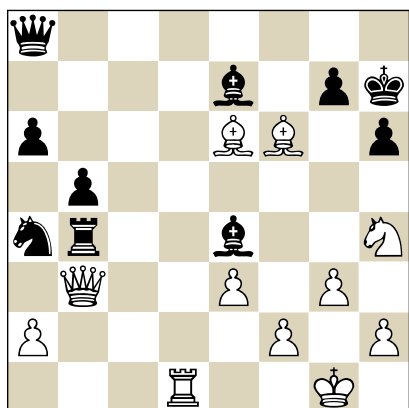


25... ♖c4

I just missed this move.

26. ♖e6+ ♔h7 27. ♖xf6 ♖xb4

Winning was 27... ♔c6!, but Vassily had about 10 seconds, so let's keep it real.



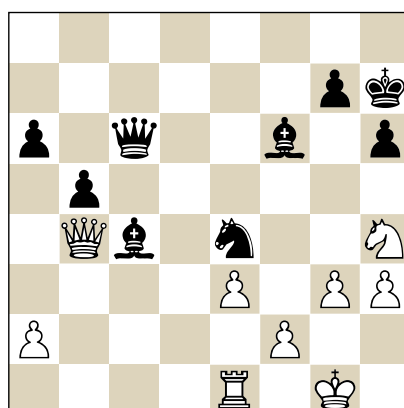
Leon 2013														
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TPR
45 minutes + 15 seconds per move														
Anish Giri	IGM	NED	2734	½	1								1½	2946
Vassily Ivanchuk	IGM	UKR	2753	½	0								½	2541
20 minutes + 10 seconds per move														
Anish Giri	IGM	NED	2734	1	1	½	1						3½	3089
Vassily Ivanchuk	IGM	UKR	2753	0	0	½	0						½	2412
5 minutes + 3 seconds per move														
Vassily Ivanchuk	IGM	UKR	2753	1	½	1	1	½	0	1	1	½	1	2927
Anish Giri	IGM	NED	2734	0	½	0	0	½	1	0	0	½	0	2560

28. ♖d5??

Another give-away move. Now it's hopeless.

After the game this position kept appearing in my head and eventually I found this brilliant save: 28. ♖g8+!.

28... ♖xd5 29. ♔a3 ♖xf6 30. ♔xb4 ♖c3 31. ♖d2 ♖c6 32. h3 ♖e4 33. ♖e2 ♖c4 34. ♖e1



34... ♖c3 35. ♔b1 ♖xe1 36. ♔xe1 ♖d3 37. ♖f3 ♖c3 38. ♔d1 ♖c2 39. ♔e1 ♖e2 40. ♔xe2 ♖xe2

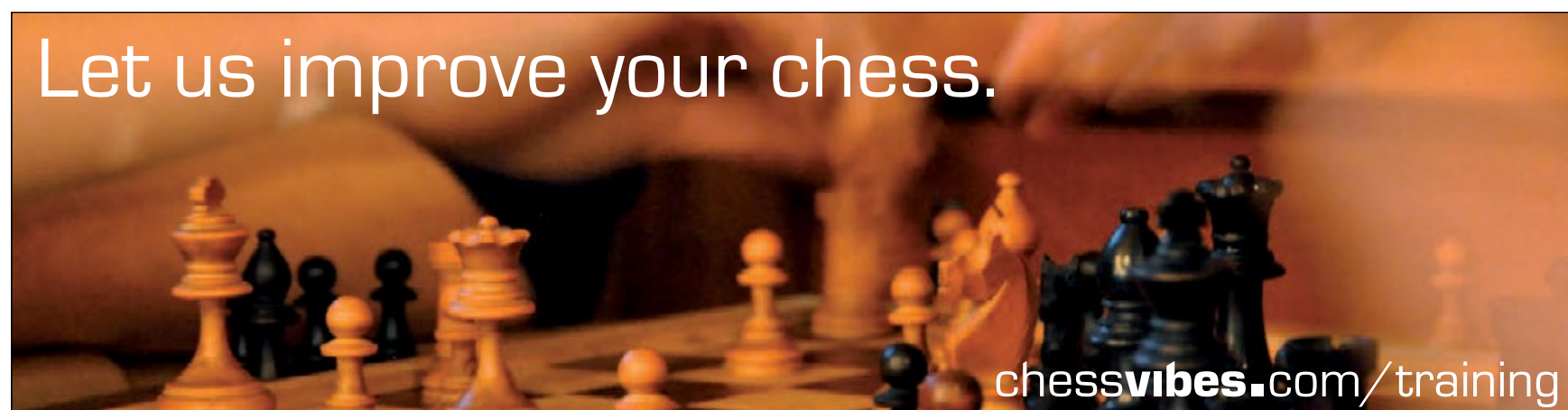
White resigned.

After this game Ivanchuk had probably regained some confidence, and since I kept playing in the same spirit, way too impulsively and plainly badly, I ended up spoiling decent positions and eventually managed to lose six games in total, while winning just one.

In fact, what I managed to accomplish on the last day, was in a way losing an already won match. While during the blitz match 5 1/2-4 1/2 or 7 1/2-2 1/2 felt all the same, I was left with a strongly dissatisfied aftertaste. I was the overall winner, as I won both the semi-rapid and the rapid, but I also counted that I had lost more games than I had won.

The next day I had my revenge on a group of kids and amateurs scoring something like 24 1/2-1/2 in a simul in just a couple of hours. But that was too late, since Vassily had already left.

The closing ceremony was short and sweet, with very impressive trophies, one for the 'Campeón' and one for the 'Sub-Campeón'. Indeed, if you are in León, you can never lose. ■



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Precepts and puzzles

L

et me see, it's been a while. Shift+1. !. That feels good...!!!!. Yep, the most important keys on the keyboard are working. Ready to roll!

This issue's column is all about improving your middlegame. We're going to take a look at two different types of book: a classic of chess literature from the late 1920s and two puzzle books from modern players.

Soviet Middlegame Technique

Who was Peter Romanovsky? He was one of the strongest players in Russia in the 1920s, winning the Soviet Championship in 1923 and 1927 (shared). The original version of this book was first published in 1929 when Romanovsky was pretty much at his peak. The manuscript of a revised edition was lost during the siege of Leningrad in 1942, but Romanovsky did finally bring out an updated version in 1960. These were later published in English as two separate titles: *Chess Middlegames: Strategy* and *Chess Middlegames: Combinations*. Both these titles are now brought together again in one volume (Part One is 'Planning' and Part Two is 'Combination'). Each part starts with a general introductory chapter and each subsequent chapter deals with a positional or combinational theme, for example 'The Two Bishops' or 'Play on the a-File'.

Apprehension was the overriding emotion as I opened this book. This book is a classic, but classics are often disappointing. Chess is changing so

fast nowadays, can a book written 80 years ago really be relevant for the modern game? Would the annotations be filled with naïve, dogmatic comments, for example about openings ('The King's Indian is known to be an inferior defence etc...')?

With the exception of an excellent final chapter (entitled 'How Players Think during the Game' – more on that later) I was not amazingly enthusiastic about the 'Combination' part of the book. There is plenty to admire: there are some fine examples from old games, and I liked the way Romanovsky tries to categorize combinations such as 'The sacrifice of a bishop for a pawn on g3, h3, g6 or h6' or 'Rook Sacrifice on g7'. However, I didn't feel that Romanovsky had a great deal to say about how to recognize, prepare and execute the different types of combinations. This part of the book has definite inspirational value – beautiful combinations make you want to play beautiful chess – but limited instructional value in my opinion. My disappointment was possibly exaggerated by the contrast with the 'Planning' part of the

book, which is absolutely superb. I read this part several times, and made copious notes for myself to try and pick out the key elements. Below is an extract from these notes. I'm paraphrasing Romanovsky's words here, and gathering material together from several different chapters (mostly the Introduction to the Planning part and the final chapter of the Combination part of the book) but I hope I'm still accurately representing Romanovsky's views.

In these paragraphs, Romanovsky gives an overview of the chess struggle, and details a number of possible approaches to its challenges. I've marked a number of key sentences in bold.

'To form a plan of action and translate it into reality constitutes the chief task within the processes of the chess struggle. This means first identifying the aims which the player's thoughts should be geared to achieving, and then solving the no-less serious problem of implementing it. **The choice of the goal should be determined by the feasibility of attaining it. The feasibility has to be assessed in a relative sense** because one player's pursuit of the goal comes up against the will and mind of his opponent. **Yet in**

Back in the saddle

A demanding job in the City of London not only forced Luke McShane to relinquish his ambitions as a professional chess player, he also had to acknowledge that he no longer has the time to write book reviews for us. That's the bad news, as we were very fond of his Through the Luking Glass columns. The good news is that Matthew Sadler, who reviewed books for us from early 2000 to the summer of 2004, accepted our invitation to resume his column with his knowledge and insights of today. 'Another case of Matthew Sadler', Matthew himself ventured. 'Sadler and Wisler', we mused, and we smiled when Luke McShane wrote to us: 'Sadler back in this saddle! Great choice, I look forward to it.' In the end we stuck to Sadler on Books, as it always was. There was nothing wrong with that.

spite of this, you cannot conduct the game without forming a plan and directing your actions in accordance with it.

‘The plans with the most chances of successful execution are those with a concrete scheme as their basis. By a concrete scheme we mean an idea in a chess player’s mind that embraces both a set of aims derived from the objective positional situation, and the means to attaining them envisaged in the maximum possible detail. **A concrete strategic scheme is based on the current positional circumstances and develops out of them**, allowing a player to **map out a path to the solution of the problem** before him.’

This idea of a plan based on an objective appraisal of the requirements of the current situation is further developed in the final chapter of the Combination part, starting with a discussion of how players think and the importance of discipline in thinking:

‘The basic objects to which the thinking of a skilled chess player applies itself – we will call them elements of thought – are relatively easy to outline. They are 3 in number:

1. The first is the position that the players have in front of their eyes
2. The second is the calculation of a variation to which this position directs a player’s attentions
3. The third is the position which mentally presents itself to the player at the conclusion of the variation – we may call it the “post-variation” position.’

Romanovsky then looks at how you move from the position in front of you, to the selection of variations to calculate.

‘It pays to take into account all factors that help you towards judging the position objectively when contemplating your move; **yet the most important thing is to be able to extract from the multitude of details the ones which reflect the essence and fundamental sense of the position** – its kernel. Usually there are 2 or 3 such details, not more; they stand out as the

most meaningful among all other elements relevant to your judgment.’

Romanovsky gives a name to this kernel: the ‘spirit of the position.’

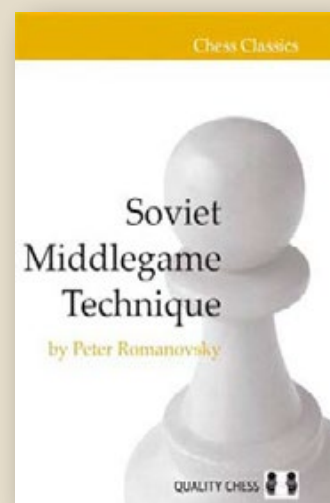
‘The **spirit of the position** is equated with the landmarks in the positional environment which give direction to the thinking of the players. A player always **endeavours to make a move in the spirit of the position**, and having made it, **he needs to be convinced that it really is so**. When considering a move or variation, we need to find a **starting point** and this means relying on the spirit of the position. **Interpreting a position incorrectly is no doubt better than not interpreting it at all.**

‘The spirit of the position might appear to be a highly variable quantity that needs to be reinterpreted after virtually every move. This delusion is understandable. But the point is that **in setting out from the spirit of the position, you are usually already selecting a rough plan of action that will guide you until some special event in the game abruptly alters the conditions of the struggle**. Naturally this special event must then be incorporated into your thinking and accordingly new points of departure must be fixed for your future actions. In other words, your play must at least partly be planned afresh.

‘Sometimes, in more lucid situations, the spirit of the position is detected quickly. Often however, the position will demand a dynamic assessment. This means a more or less deep investigation into the variations which arise from the spirit of the position on the board, and which at the same time **correct the player’s original interpretation of it**. Sometimes a state of conflict arises, in which the **examination of variations indicates that the static assessment contained errors – that the essence or spirit of the position was perceived incorrectly**. Yet by no means all players are prepared to admit this; they will sometimes prefer to play at variance with the spirit of the position rather than **go back to the process of interpreting it**.’

This is such a great overview of how you should think during a game. First of all, I loved the way that Romanovsky acknowledges – even incorporates – the element of uncertainty into his thinking framework. Your plans might all be in vain, you might make mistakes in evaluating the position during a game and have to start again from scratch, but that should never stop you from constantly trying to formulate clear goals and discovering methods of realizing them. Secondly, I was struck by his comment that ‘*A player always endeavours to make a move in the spirit of the position, and having made it, he needs to be convinced that it really is so.*’ It made me think of an explanation that Reshevsky gave when asked about his chronic time-trouble. ‘It is my practice to spend the major part of my allotted time on the first fifteen or twenty moves of a tournament game. As a result I am often forced to play at breakneck speed to avoid overstepping the time limit. After such a game I am often asked why I took so long considering “obvious” moves. That’s

**Soviet
 Middlegame
 Technique**
 Peter Romanovsky
 Quality Chess,
 2013



a question to which I am able to give a partial answer. To a chess master, there is no such thing as an “obvious” move. Experience has shown repeatedly that wins or draws are thrown away by thoughtless play. Careful planning is the essence of chess strategy. Each move must be scrutinized with care. Each must be analysed in the light of the plan under consideration. Nowhere is waste of time more severely punished than in chess. Let



me hasten to explain however that I do not mean taking twenty minutes for one move but rather failing to make each move play its part in the scheme of things. By playing slowly during the early phases of the game, I am able to grasp the basic requirements of each position [in other word, the ‘spirit of the position’ that Romanovsky talks about – MS]. Then, despite being in time pressure, I have little difficulty in finding the best continuation.’ (taken from Kasparov’s wonderful *My Great Predecessors Part IV*). I call this process ‘worrying your way to the truth’. Thirdly, the idea that you should not be afraid of refining your initial view of the position as you discover more and more about the position through calculation struck a chord, because it was one of my ‘Eureka’ moments when once trying to understand how I should analyse during the game.

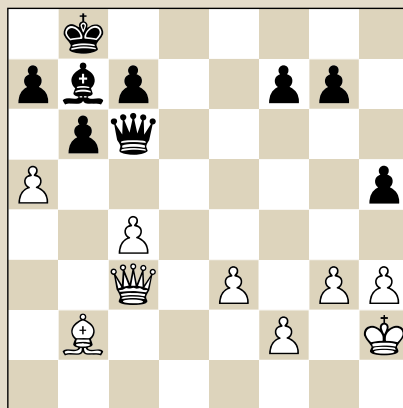
I always used to think that my thinking was fairly disorganized when I was in form, but that because I was playing well for some mysterious reason, it didn’t really matter. When I was out of form, I felt I needed to correct this deficiency and really tighten up my thinking. Unfortunately, whenever I did this I tended to fall back into the discipline espoused by Kotov in *Think like a Grandmaster* (or at least my – maybe warped – interpretation of it). You know the stuff: draw up a list of candidate moves, crunch through all the variations methodically one-by-one and then emerge with the best move. Horrible – it feels like torture thinking like that! At some stage I understood that thinking about a position isn’t a linear process – candidate moves, calculate & play – but a set of skills which you apply, put aside and then reapply at different stages of your analysis.

So in a complicated position, you’ll probably start off with your brainstorming, move-generating skills to get yourself a good initial set of options. Then you might invoke your reasoning skills to try and order and prioritize the possibilities: which are realistic, which are not what the position wants? You

might then switch on your calculating skills for a variation, then after a few moves discover that you need to reason a bit what needs to be done next... and then switch back to calculation afterwards. In the middle of calculating one line, you might spot an idea that makes another initial option more attractive. Depending how attractive that idea is, you might put your current deliberations on hold and check the other option first. Thinking like this isn’t easy – you need energy, alertness and flexibility to do it – but it beats the Kotov method hands down. Why? Because the aim is never to analyse all variations in a position; it’s to find moves and plans that fit the situation in front of you.

There are lots of thought-provoking moments in the Strategy part – far too many to mention in a short space – but I did just want to present one more: the concept of ‘harmony’. This term is often used but what does it actually mean? Romanovsky explains first of all: ‘*We are not speaking here of a mechanical cooperation between the pieces but of their concerted activity within the context of a unified plan. It is important that the harmonious action should be purposeful, directed to implementing a realistic game plan that derives from the features of the position.*’

Romanovsky then gives a fantastic illustrative example and explains further:



‘The queens and bishops on both sides are acting harmoniously, but whereas on Black’s side this harmony is in the highest degree effective, having the enemy king as its object, on the White

side it misses the mark, in spite of the wholly identical outward configuration. The conclusion is clear: harmony in the action of the forces is **not a self-sufficient factor but is subordinate to the overall plan of the game**. Harmonious action within the framework of a realistic plan means that each piece is complementing the actions of the others and playing its indispensable part to achieve the aim in view.’

This book is highly recommended. I wish I’d read it when I was little (instead of Kotov!).

The Chess Puzzle Book 4

It’s very dangerous to give me a puzzle book. I’m extremely fussy about them and I have 3 non-negotiable requirements.

1. *It should be possible to solve puzzles one-by-one*

This is actually about the layout of the book but to my mind very important for a puzzle book. I don’t know about you but I can never guarantee that I can spend a couple of hours in one evening solving a set of 12 puzzles. I’m thrilled if I can steal an hour from my working week and spend it on chess. I don’t want to have to wait a couple of weeks before being able to check all the answers – I want to check things as I go along (maybe 2 or 3 at a time) and make sure I’m on the right track. What I then absolutely DO NOT want is to accidentally spot the answers to the next puzzles in the test!

2. *It should be easy to relate a puzzle to a theme previously explained in the book*

The point of a puzzle book is generally to teach a practical skill by allowing the student to solve a set of problems with a similar theme. There’s nothing more frustrating than trying to solve a puzzle with knowledge you’ve just acquired only to see from the solution that something completely different was being tested.

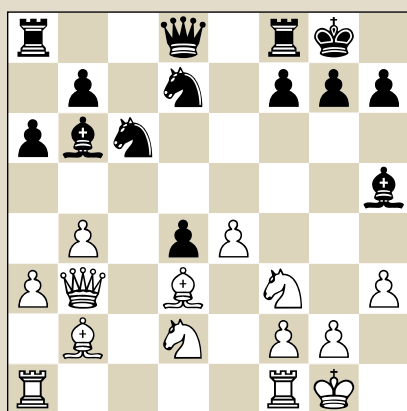
3. *The puzzles should be 100% correct and understandable*

If just one puzzle in a test is incorrect or if the solution is incompre-

hensible (or badly explained) then I lose interest immediately. I feel like an idiot if I spend time in the evening after work trying to solve incorrect puzzles.

All-in-all, putting together a good puzzle book is a tough proposition. You're asking a lot of effort from your readers so mistakes get noticed much more easily and cause more annoyance than in a normal book. So, how angry did I get? ☺ The authors can't help this so I do feel bad complaining, but this book has some serious layout problems. The last 80 pages of the book are dedicated to a set of 12 tests, each with 8 puzzles. The answers to the puzzles take up the last 30 pages. Unfortunately, the answers are laid out extremely compactly with a rather murky typeface which makes it impossible to look up the answer to just one of the puzzles. You need to search for a while before you find the answer you're interested in after which you've not only seen the answers to the other puzzles in the test, but also some of the answers to the next test as well! There are also a number of irritating mistakes. For example, the answers to the first test start on page 150 then leap inexplicably to page 182 before finishing on page 151. Also, in the first test, the same position (Kreiman-Becerra Rivero) appears twice.

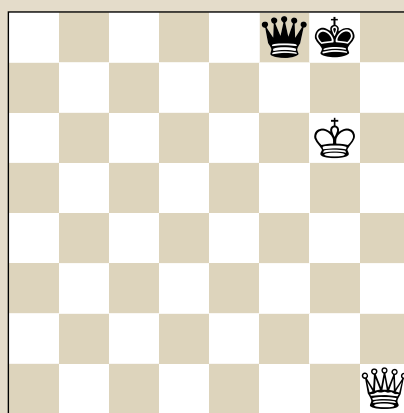
I also had a few gripes on the content side. I wondered about the relationship between some of these puzzles and the themes handled in the book. For example:



Epishin-Cherniaev
Hastings 2003/04

The solution was 17. ♖c4 ♜de5 18. ♜d5, transferring the bishop to a powerful square. I solved it fine, but I was a bit confused which piece of knowledge acquired in this book was being tested. Improving the position of your worst-placed piece maybe? There's a blink-and-you-miss-it mention of this theme on page 22 ('The principle of the worst-place piece. This principle, also called the Makogonov principle, means that you should improve the position of your worst-placed piece if you do not find another better plan') and that's all as far as I can see.

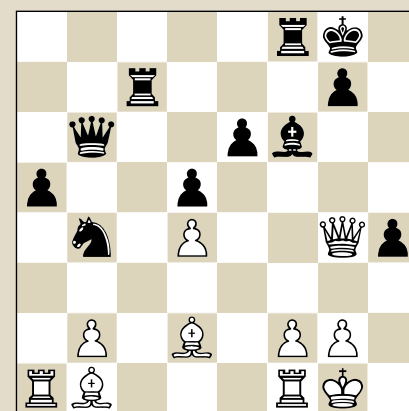
There was also something that bothered me in the first 6 chapters in which the general positional themes to be tested – 'Prophylaxis', 'The Principle of Two Weaknesses', 'The Right Exchange', 'Domination', 'Do Not Rush' and 'Converting an Advantage' – are discussed. I felt that the authors had lost sight of the fundamental elements of the themes they were describing. It's a little tricky to explain, but I'll give it a go starting with 'Prophylaxis'. Every move you play has a lot of different facets. With a little bit of effort you can find a prophylactic element to pretty much any move you play:



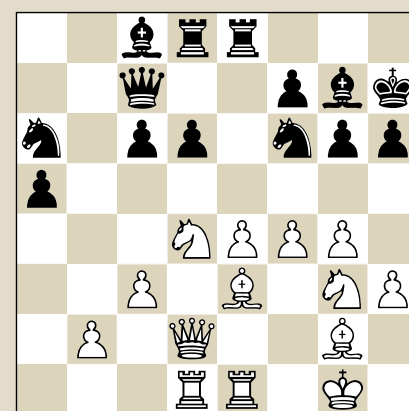
You might say that 1. ♖h7+ delivering mate is prophylaxis against imminent checks from the black queen. Looked at it that way, pretty much everyone is a master of prophylaxis! It reminds me of Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who upon learning that there is only verse or prose, and that everything that isn't

prose is verse, and everything that isn't verse is prose, exclaims: 'My goodness! I've been speaking prose for 40 years without ever knowing it!'

Take this example from the book, presented under the heading 'Prophylaxis in attack':



Black defends against 29. ♖h5 with 29...g6 so 29. ♜g6! is the prophylactic move to prevent this defensive idea. I understand the prophylactic element to 29. ♜g6, but I do not believe that you need any inkling of prophylaxis to come up with 29. ♜g6. It's attacking technique, it's sticking your pieces in close to the opponent's king, and it's the type of move that I would have played as a very young player without much thought. Prophylactic thinking – to my mind – is a way of looking at the position that opens up a range of possibilities that you simply could not find with straightforward, direct thinking. The perfect example of that is the Karpov-Timman game so often quoted by Dvoretsky in his books:



Direct action with g4-g5 is not effective, so Karpov shifts flexibly into



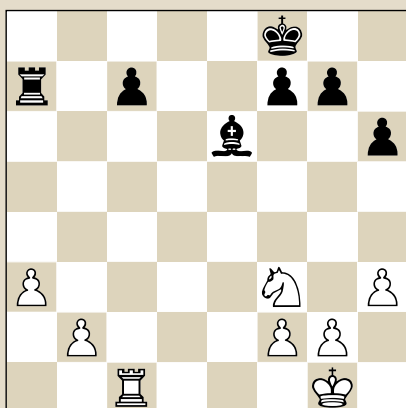
another mode of thinking, focusing instead on squeezing the joy out of the opponent's active possibilities while at the same time maintaining or even improving his own active prospects.

22. ♖c2!

A wonderfully subtle move. Every time I see it, I have to think a little to remember what the point was! Black's natural next move was to activate his knight on a6 with 22... ♘c5. This can now be dealt with by the far from obvious 23.b4! ♘e6 24. bxa5, when 24... ♗xd4 25.cxd4 ♕xa5 26. ♕xc6 wins a pawn! That's something I'd be really proud to find in a practical game.

I had the same feeling about the 'Do not Rush' principle described in Chapter 5. I first saw this principle described in Shereshevsky's wonderful *Endgame Strategy*. It's a way of increasing your reliability in converting stable, winning advantages.

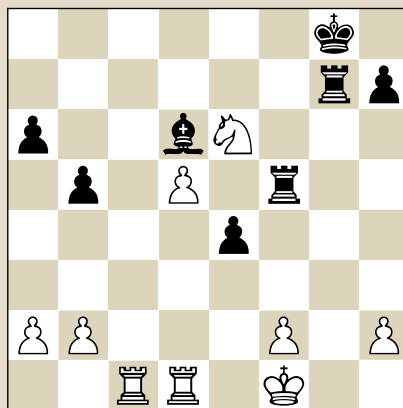
A good example of this is the game Capablanca-Ragozin, Moscow 1936.



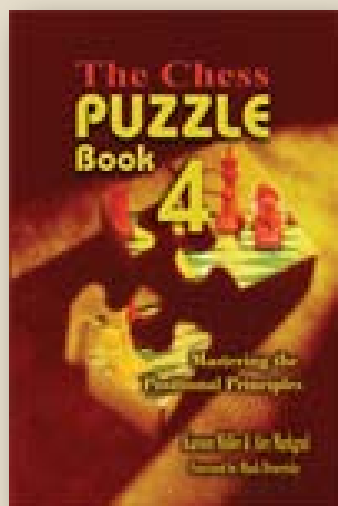
33. ♗d4 ♖b7 34.b4 ♗d7 35.f4 ♗e7 36. ♖f2 ♖a7 37. ♖c3 ♗d6 38. ♖d3 ♗e7 39. ♗e3 ♖a4 40. ♖c3 ♗d6 41. ♖d3 ♗e7 42. ♖c3 ♗d6 43. ♗e2 g6 44. ♖d3+ ♗e6 45. ♗d4 ♖a6 46. ♖e3+ ♗d6 47. ♗c3 etc...!

Repetition of moves, regrouping of pieces, no sudden pawn rushes, infinite patience: everything geared towards 100% certainty of finishing

off a won game. That to me is the essence of 'Do not rush'. So I found a few of the examples in Müller & Markgraf's book a little strange:



Black tried the tempting 29...e3, which turned out badly after 30.f4. The comment next to the exercise is



The Chess Puzzle Book 4

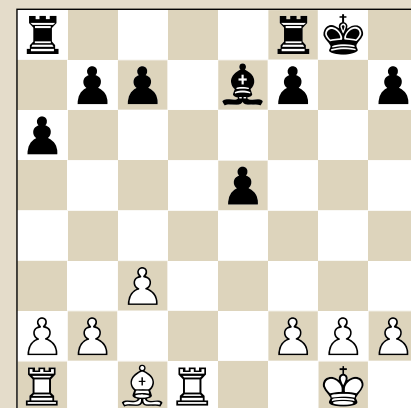
Mastering the Positional Principles by Karsten Müller & Alexander Markgraf
Russell Enterprises, 2012

'Why does 29...e3 violate the "do not rush" principle?' I mean, this is just a tactical mistake. If 29...e3 works, you should play it. You have to analyse it, and if it doesn't work you try and make something else work. In my opinion, the principle 'Do not rush' is of no help whatsoever in determining the right way to play in this position.

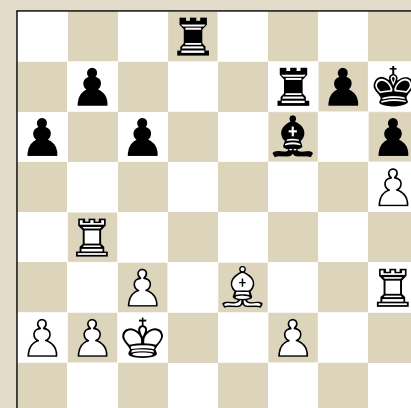
That's a lot of complaining ☹, I'm really sorry about that because there were also lots of things I enjoyed about the book.

One of them I just have to share with you. In the chapter on 'The Principle of Two Weaknesses', Müller & Markgraf inevitably quote the

famous Znosko Borovsky-Alekhine game from Paris 1933:



Alekhine came up with his 6-point plan: exchanging off a pair of rooks, bringing his king to the centre, opening up the h-file and tying White down a bit there by threatening to invade and then opening up the queenside and penetrating there with the rook. Yawn, yawn, seen the game lots of times before, White was pretty weak and just played appallingly, yawn, yawn. But Müller & Markgraf do something really fantastic: they couple it with a modern game using precisely the same themes!



This is Peter Heine Nielsen against Alexey Dreev, 18th North Sea Cup 2003. A strong White player! See what happened:

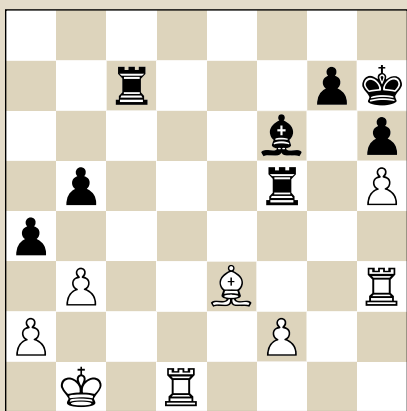
29... ♖e7 30. ♖f4 ♖d5 31.c4 ♖de5 32. ♖g4 ♖f5

To be able to tie White's pieces down to the h5 weakness with ... ♖ee5.

33. ♖g1 b5!

Opening up a second front on the queenside.

34.cxb5 cxb5 35. ♖d1 a5 36.b3 ♖c7+ 37. ♖b1 a4



Relentlessly continuing to open lines on the queenside to create a second weakness.

38. ♖hh1 axb3 39. axb3 ♖c3

The rook penetrates... **40. ♔a2 b4** ...and it's the end. The threat of ...♖a5+ is too much. Seeing a modern example between super-strong players made me appreciate the classic Znosko Borovsky-Alekhine game so much more! I must have played through it about 20 times since then!

So to conclude, in general it's not my ideal puzzle book. The layout problems definitely detracted from my enjoyment, I wasn't convinced by the explanations of some of the themes and I also wasn't always sure about the relation between the material in the book and the themes in the puzzles. But I did learn some good stuff and the puzzles are of a generally high quality. I spent a lot of time solving them and I was happy with the answers and the explanations given.

Chess Evolution – Mastery

So having gone all huffy about one puzzle book, time for the next one! To be honest, at some stage I thought I was going to complain quite a lot about this one too. Probably it wasn't a good idea to start reading it after a rotten day at work while standing in a jam-packed and heavily-delayed commuter train. Browsing through a chapter on what Yusupov calls the 'Comparison Method' (a way of deciding between very similar moves or variations) I started muttering moodily to myself: 'talk about stating the bloody obvious... grumble... moan'. Well, I put the

book aside for a week, and only picked it up again a few days into my holiday in the South of France. Fuelled by wine, crème brûlée, smelly cheese and the occasional ray of sunshine, the world seemed a much better place... and the book appealed much more to me. Actually, I like it an awful lot!

Chess Evolution 3
Mastery
by Artur Yusupov
Quality Chess, 2013



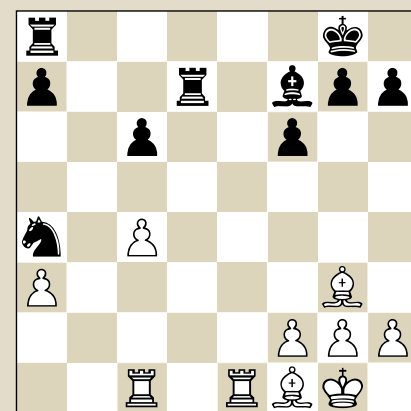
The book is divided up into 24 chapters, each dedicated to a positional theme such as 'Shutting out a piece', 'Outposts for knights' or (you've guessed it) 'The bishop pair'. After 4-5 pages of explanation and a few examples to illustrate the theme, you're off into a set of 12 exercises.

In contrast to Müller & Markgraf's book, the layout is really excellent. Although a number of solutions are on the same page, the number of the exercise you're looking for jumps out at you from the page, so you can easily avoid sneaking a look at the other solutions.

Yusupov presents each theme in a straightforward way and he draws up rules for each of the themes. For example, in the chapter 'The bishop pair' Yusupov draws up a number of simple-sounding rules for playing with the two bishops against bishop and knight:

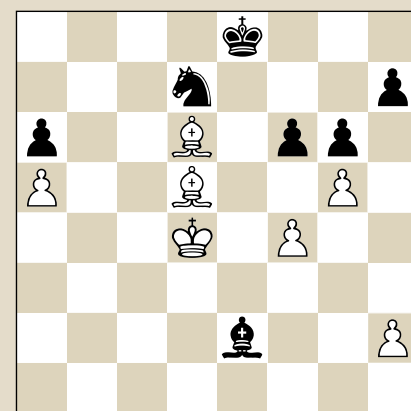
1. Play against the knight
2. Exchange one of the bishops at a favourable moment
3. Open the position

I wasn't too bowled over by this – it sounds pretty obvious, although I'm not so sure I could have given you that advice off the top of my head if you'd asked me – but then I went to solve the puzzles for the chapter and something weird happened!



I looked at the position for a few seconds and a thought popped into my head almost immediately: 'Play against the knight!' together with the (admittedly obvious) idea of 1.c5 and 2. ♕d6 (amusingly enough, my next thought was of Romanovsky with his theme of placing a bishop on the opponent's 3rd rank!).

Then a couple of examples later...



I studied the position for a few minutes. There seemed to be lots of tempting possibilities. Then all of a sudden those rules started nagging away at me. White's already played against the knight very successfully: it barely has a square. Hey, wait a minute! Isn't this then the ideal moment for 'exchange one of the bishops at a favourable moment'? Yes it is! 44. ♕c4! After 44... ♗xc4 45. ♔xc4, the king penetrates easily to the queenside.

This is how a puzzle book should work. Present the themes in a clear, concise way and select the puzzles in such a way that they trigger the recollection of the rules and advice you've just read. No trivial matter, but Yusupov's book does this wonderfully well. Recommended! ■



Hans Ree

Appearing in a blaze of light

A personal and intimate memoir and two more new technical books about the genius of Mikhail Tal; there cannot be enough of them. Like many chess players, Hans Ree not only admired Tal. He loved him.

Iwondered how old Mikhail Tal was on the picture that we saw during the recent Tal Memorial, as a tournament logo and on posters at the playing venue. More or less the same age as on the picture on the front cover of Genna Sosonko's wonderful book *The World Champions I Knew*, of which the 72-page chapter on Tal is the *pièce de résistance*. But about that picture I also don't know when it was taken.

I could ask Genna, of course, but I find speculating far more interesting. Tal has a pigeon on his extended hand – his left hand of course, which had all five fingers – which brings the San Marco Square in Venice to mind.

Did Tal ever play in Venice? Actually, he did, in 1957, when a team from Riga played in several Italian cities, crushing teams from Milan, Venice, Reggio Emilia, Florence and Rome. But as Tal was 20 years old then, the picture cannot have been taken in that time.

As far as I can ascertain, Tal was closest to Venice when he was a second to Anatoly Karpov for the world championship match against Viktor Kortchnoi in Merano in 1981. Their cooperation had started in 1978, when Karpov played a title match against Kortchnoi for the first time.

Genna explains in his book that Tal had fallen out of favour with the Soviet sports officials – certainly not for the first time – and had not been allowed to play tournaments abroad for several years. Helping Karpov was his lifeline. In his memoir *Chess is my Life*, a grim Viktor Kortchnoi wrote: 'In order to save his active chess life, Mikhail Tal finally gave up his soul and entered the service of Karpov.'

In another recent book about Tal, *The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal* by Karsten Müller and Raymund Stolze (2012), Vladimir Kramnik has a more positive view on Tal's service, saying in an interview that it may have helped Tal, 'even if there were only the circumstance that it diverted him from, shall we say, his other pleasures in which he indulged as well as chess.' Elsewhere in the same book, the German GM and chess journalist Helmut Pfleger recounts that Karpov had described Tal to him as a traitor. Neither Pfleger nor I know why Karpov said that, but in the tense atmosphere of Soviet world championship matches, traitors were suspected to be hiding behind every tree. The well-known chess official Alexander Bakh, a good friend of Karpov's, who is also interviewed in the book, says that Tal contributed quite considerably to Karpov's two match victories against Kortchnoi.

But to come back to that picture with the pigeon, being a cheerful

fellow at heart I like to imagine that Karpov and Tal, when their work was successfully done in Merano, made a well-deserved trip together to beautiful Venice, only a few hours' drive away, and that Karpov made that picture of his loyal and effective servant himself on the Piazza San Marco.

Speculation can inspire a rosy view, but actually I think it just as likely that the pigeon was from Amsterdam and that Genna Sosonko took that picture on the front cover of his book himself on Dam Square, which is also full of pigeons. Anyway, it shows us the mature Tal, still smiling cheerfully.

Saving Tal's life

In Müller and Stolze's book, Boris Spassky speaks about a painting by the Russian artist Alexander Ivanov that shows Christ appearing to his people and revealing himself to them: 'To some extent that was Mikhail Tal's effect on the chess public of his day when in the middle of the last century, he came to the surface in a blaze of light. He was the chess messiah.'

Spassky also recounts how he saved Tal's life during the Olympiad in Varna in 1962, where he shared a hotel room with him. Once, when Spassky had gone out, Tal fell asleep with a burning cigarette. Spassky: 'I did not get back till quite late, returning to the hotel about half past three in the morning. Mikhail's bed was already alight. If I had gone in only a few minutes later he would not have survived. That was how I saved Tal on my Olympiad premiere.'

Drunken Tal setting himself on fire, Spassky coming home at half past three. So much for the legendary iron discipline of Soviet teams.

The Magician visits Amsterdam

Appearing in a blaze of light, that was more or less my feeling and that of many others when I saw Tal for the first time in the flesh. It was at a simultaneous display in Amsterdam in 1959. Tal, 22 years old and running from one success to another, had already won the Soviet championship twice and had just come from the tournament in Zürich, which he had won ahead of Gligoric, Fischer, Keres and Larsen. Soon he would play the Candidates' in Yugoslavia.

There were many other simul givers, but of course they were all extras to Tal's star performance, such as our World Champion Max Euwe, even though he beat the 14-year-old Hans Ree that evening.

Tal was radiant with energy, zest for life and what seemed – deceptively as we know now – robust good health. The pleasure of having him in our midst was even enhanced by the one game he lost, against the elder statesman of the Amsterdam chess café, J.G. van Eybergen, who after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 b5 5.♙b3 ♙b7 6.0-0 – so far so good – confronted him with the outrageous 6...g5. It should have been a losing move, but Tal probably stopped taking his clever opponent seriously, and he lost against a spectacular attack in 20 moves. 'The wonder of the world has been butchered', wrote a Dutch journalist.

Last days of Tal

Many years later I almost cried when I saw the short video *Last days of Tal* on YouTube, with images of Tal, terminally ill and only a month before his death, playing in a blitz tournament against Garry Kasparov in Moscow. You can see that he could hardly walk, and his emaciated face looked as if he was close to a hundred years old, whereas in fact he was only 51.

Genna Sosonko writes: 'When Tal heard about a big blitz tournament that Kasparov was in and wanted to play, his loved ones actively tried to



BORIS DOLMATOVSKIY

Playing blitz with Kasparov, only one month before his death. 'Even the dying Tal would be Tal, sacrificing a knight, as he had done countless times on the vulnerable squares of Black's Sicilian.'

talk him out of it, but his consultant unexpectedly agreed to it immediately: things couldn't get any worse. He came to the tournament straight from the hospital and took third place in it, beating Kasparov and many other grandmasters. He had summoned up all his fantastic strength of spirit and willpower for the last time.'

In his book *My Great Predecessors* Part II, Kasparov gives the first 17 moves of their blitz game from memory.

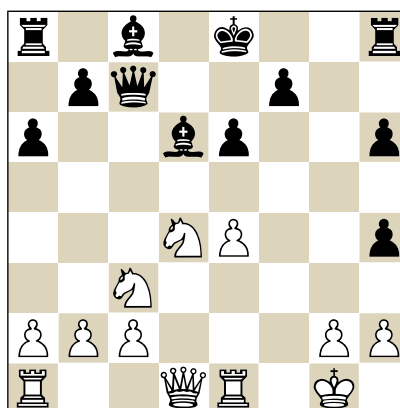
Mikhail Tal

Garry Kasparov

Moscow blitz 1992

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙b5+ ♘d7 4.d4 ♘f6 5.0-0 e6 6.♙xd7+ ♘xd7 7.♘c3 a6 8.♙g5 ♔c7 9.♙e1 cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♘e5 11.f4 h6 12.♙h4 g5 13.fxe5 gxh4 14.exd6 ♙xd6

Kasparov: 'Is it not time for White to concern himself with how to equalize? That's not what happened!'



15.♘d5 Even the dying Tal would be Tal, sacrificing a knight, as he had done countless times on the vulnerable squares of Black's Sicilian.

15...exd5 16.exd5+ ♔f8 17.♙f3

White doesn't have enough for his piece and Kasparov managed to beat off the attack while retaining his extra material, but he lost on time.

Blitzkrieg against Botvinnik

After his appearance in Amsterdam Tal went on to win the Candidates' in Yugoslavia and the following year, in 1960, he played against Botvinnik. If I wrote that all of us were rooting for Tal, you might ask who these 'all of us' were. Well, the members of my junior chess club, not only because Tal was only a few years older than us, but because of his style – taking risks, setting the board on fire with sacrifices and doing things that were thought to be impossible. There were also more conservative chess lovers, of course, who thought and hoped that Botvinnik would rightfully stop all this nonsense and put the upstart in his place. Then came the first game of the championship match, a real shocker.

Robert Hübner writes that the commentator must suppress his feelings when presenting the moves. In his own annotations he doesn't allow exclamation marks, because contrary to question marks these can never be



Hans Ree

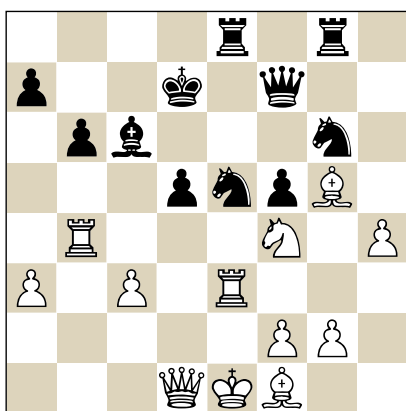
a sign of a fundamental change of the evaluation of a position; they're just ways to say 'bravo!' I am not annotating here, just resuscitating old memories, so I may give free rein to the feelings that I had at that time.

Mikhail Tal

Mikhail Botvinnik

Moscow WC 1960 (1)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♚c7 7.♚g4 f5 8.♚g3 ♘e7 9.♚xg7 ♙g8 10.♚xh7 cxd4 11.♙d1 ♙d7 12.♚h5+ ♘g6 13.♘e2 d3 14.cxd3 ♙a4+ 15.♙e1 ♚xe5 16.♙g5 ♘c6 17.d4 ♚c7 18.h4 e5 19.♙h3 ♚f7 20.dxe5 ♘cxe5 21.♙e3 ♙d7 22.♙b1 b6 23.♘f4 ♙ae8 24.♙b4 ♙c6 25.♚d1



How nice. It looks as if White's king and queen have never left their squares.

25...♘xf4 26.♙xf4 ♘g6 27.♙d4 ♙xe3+ 28.fxe3 ♙c7 29.c4 dxc4 30.♙xc4 ♚g7 31.♙xg8 ♚xg8 32.h5 Black resigned

What a game! White's ♙e1-d1-e1 and ♚d1-h5-d1. The blitzkrieg with his rooks, ♙h1-h3-e3 and ♙a1-b1-b4-d4. Was it really possible to beat Botvinnik like that in only 32 moves? Fifteen years old, with just enough knowledge of chess to understand that this was uncommon, I was star-struck.

In an earlier book, *Russian Silhouettes*, Sosonko relates a story by Tal's mentor, trainer and friend Alexander Koblenz. Crawling on all fours among the bulletins on the carpet of his hotel room, Koblenz had accidentally hit

on the move 11.♙d1 and could communicate that to Tal just 30 minutes before the start of the first match game.

How wonderfully amateurish this appears to us. Sosonko compares it to a game of the match between Steinitz and Gunsberg in 1891, when Steinitz asked his opponent if he was morally obliged to play a certain dubious variation.

I don't know if Sosonko really believed Koblenz's story – he writes that it provokes a smile – but anyway in his book about the match Tal himself gives a more sober account, writing that 11.♙d1 had already been recommended by Euwe and played in the game Gligoric–Petrosian from the Candidates' of 1959, the tournament that Tal had won.

Koblenz in his own writings made it appear as if that move and that game were quite new to Tal, half an hour before he would confront Botvinnik, but that's impossible.

Tal was obviously well-prepared and so was Botvinnik, who spent only four minutes on his novelty 11...♙d7.

Dictating great books

Tal's match book has been called the finest account of a world championship match ever written by one of the participants. This was before Kasparov's books about his matches against Karpov were published, but as these are completely different, it would be silly to compare them. Tal didn't weave labyrinths of long variations – his notes on his speculative knight sacrifice in Game 5 are an exception, although nothing compared to Kasparov's efforts – but he gives a detailed and very honest account of his personal feelings and deliberations. He really tells us how it was to play that match.

Tal was a wonderful writer. I have often written that my all-time favourite chess book is *Die hypermoderne Schachpartie* by Tartakower, but part of my attachment to it is due to the fact that I bought it when I was very young.

From my burning house I would also save, apart from Tartakower's book, *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal* (RHM Press, 1976), a massive tome of 519 pages. It has the form of a conversation between Tal and an unnamed journalist, possibly Yakov Damsky.

According to Sosonko, Tal dictated all his books and articles, which is amazing. The liveliness common to all his writings might be expected from the brilliant conversationalist that Tal could be, but dictated articles tend to be disorganized and sloppy. Not so with Tal, who apparently could be concise and to the point in improvised speech. Where others plodded, he flew on wings.

While preparing this article, I came across a statement by Murray Chandler, who called *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal* the best chess book ever written.

When people eulogize Tal, they usually mean the young Tal, the man of the dazzling attacks who tried to prove that 2+2=5, at least sometimes. One easily forgets that in 1973 Tal was third on the FIDE rating list after Fischer and Karpov, and in 1980 second after Karpov. Having become a more universal player, Tal had a series of 86 consecutive tournament games without a loss in 1972 and 1973, and in 1973 and 1974 he improved on this with a series of 95 games. This record will never be broken.

Tal himself has said that the mature Tal would have made mince-meat of Tal the young rascal. Sosonko doubts this and I like to do the same.

A few modest suggestions

There is one man in the chess world who outdoes even Kasparov in weaving labyrinths of variations in his notes and that, of course, is Robert Hübner. In *The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal* there is a characteristic contribution by him: his analysis of Tal-Keller, Zurich 1959, truly a tremendously complicated game, fills 46 pages.



Mikhail Tal: admired and loved.

BORIS DOLMATOVSKY

No wonder, as somewhere on the way, when he discusses the question of whether Tal's sacrifice 14.dxe6 was stronger than the alternative 14.Qa4, he writes: 'However, to establish this in a reasonably reliable way would, considering the present state of chess knowledge and with the use of electronic help, be a year's work for a good chess player.'

Hübner concludes his herculean labour thus: 'The discussion of this game could fill a whole book. Here we had to limit ourselves to a few modest suggestions.'

Modest suggestions! As far as I know Hübner, he is not given to uproarious laughter, but I can imagine a faint mischievous smile on his

face when he wrote this – not that I want to suggest that he didn't mean what he wrote.

Although there is an abundance of stories and several interviews in *The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal*, the bulk of the book consists of game fragments – often quite long, while sometimes the complete game is given – which serve as puzzles to be solved by the reader. About Hübner's chapter Raymond Stolze – I think it is Stolze who wrote most of the text of the book and Müller who did the technical analysis – writes: 'So after the solution of the ten exercises which will follow, take trouble to delve even more deeply into the inexhaustible source of material that is in this game with at our side such a first-rate mentor. In any case, we will guarantee you that it will be worth your while, because if you put your trust in Robert Hübner, you will be embarking on a journey of discovery into the real world of chess, from which computers are to the greatest possible extent banned!'

True and noble words, but who can live up to them when Hübner admits that an exhaustive study of even one position of the game, after Black's 13th move, would take a year? Life is short.

Post-hypnotic suggestions

This year a new edition of the book *Study Chess with Tal*, by Mikhail Tal and Alexander Koblencs, was published. I think the book is really by, well let's call him Koblencs this time. There are many different spellings of his name and this one seems to be aimed at claiming that he was the cosmopolitan Jew from Riga, whose native language was German, as a full-bred Latvian national.

This book contains complete games, interrupted by questions. Wonderful games, well-chosen questions. It doesn't really matter, but I don't think that these books will fulfil their stated aim of teaching the student to make combinations like Tal.

Speaking for myself, I was often able to find Tal's sacrificial combinations, but realized that these combinations often led to chaotic positions in which I would be clueless how to go on if it was my own game.

Long ago I saw a TV documentary that showed people who were hypnotized and were given post-hypnotic suggestions like 'you will play the piano like Rachmaninoff'. And indeed, I heard sparkling piano play.

I wanted to be hypnotized and be told that I would play like Tal. Because I adored Tal and maybe also because my own style of playing chess was regrettably as far removed of Tal's as could possibly be. I didn't succeed in playing like Tal and I didn't succeed in being hypnotized either. You can't play like Tal, neither by hypnosis nor by tactical exercises.

Happy times of the past

In his memoir, Sosonko does not hide Tal's frailties. Alcoholism, excessive smoking, drug dependency, a firm resolution to leave all the routine chores of daily life to others, and, charming and friendly as Tal was, a basic indifference to other people.

He writes: 'And only after his death, when the trumpets start to resound, and the insults are covered with haze and disappear, do the things that only those that were close to him knew and went through go somewhere far away, and now become so unimportant and insignificant. And it seems that the time that was spent with that person was real life, and now all that's left is remembering and describing the happy times of the past for others.'

I still remember the first line of the obituary I wrote in a newspaper after Tal's death: 'All chess World Champions are admired, but Mikhail Tal was loved, both by the general public and by his colleagues.' I feel privileged to have been around in the chess world when Tal was there, and I cherish the five tournament games that I played against him. And some blitz games – all of which I lost. ■

Sergey Shipov

CURRENT ELO: 2541

DATE OF BIRTH: April 17, 1966

PLACE OF BIRTH: Murom in Vladimir Oblast

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: Moscow



What is your favourite colour?

Red.

What food makes you happy?

Good roast meat. And after it – a crust of bread with a thin layer of jam spread on it. With tea.

And what drink?

Dry French wine.

Who is your favourite author?

Every author, no matter how wonderful, has some works that I don't like. So for me the best remain Shakespeare and Pushkin. Their level, their lowest rung, remains unsurpassable.

What is your all-time favourite movie?

Of foreign ones – Cameron's *Titanic*. I respect professionals who deeply immerse themselves in the film's subject. From our cinema I'll mention Mikhail Shveitser's *Little Tragedies*.

What is your favourite TV series?

Abroad – *Twin Peaks*. At home – *Seventeen Moments of Spring*.

Do you have a favourite actor?

Jack Nicholson, Innokenty Smoktunovsky.

And a favourite actress?

Sharon Stone, Inna Churikova.

What music do you like to listen to?

Pink Floyd, Akvarium.

Do you have a favourite painter?

Salvador Dali, Viktor Vasnetsov.

What do you see as your best result ever?

The Complete Hedgehog – the English version of the book. My tournament results are trivial in comparison with it.

What was the best game you ever played?

Carlsen-Shipov, Tromsø 2006. After it (and after winning the tournament) I realized that I couldn't ever do anything better as a practical player – and stopped playing in tournaments.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time and why?

Alexander Alekhine. A man with a strong character, he went his own way and was self-made. His games and books are ideal for beginners. Through Alekhine's stunning games you start to love chess.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?

Lev Polugaevsky: *The Birth of the Variation*.

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?

At every tournament (as a player or a coach) I look for lucky signs (clothes, the route to the playing venue, the food,...) and count the unlucky ones.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?

Chigorin, Alekhine and Spassky.

What is the best piece of advice you were ever given?

Yakov Damsky advised me only to write what I myself think, what's born inside me, what my point of view is. Diluting one's own views in the ocean

of all the well-known clichés and stock phrases is a dangerous trap for a writer and commentator.

Is there something you'd love to learn?

I'd like to learn foreign languages. I'm offended that God divided up languages among the people of our planet.

Where is your favourite place in the world?

The forest near the village in Vladimir Oblast where I grew up. The smell of pine needles and grass, moss and mushrooms – I'm always at home there.

What is your greatest fear?

Time. Clocks. Our final accounting.

What would you save from your house if it were on fire?

A cat called Lis. And my papers.

If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?

A play-off system after a drawn game. Every evening a winner should be determined. Only in that case will chess become a fully-fledged sport.

Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?

No. But it's very good for us chess players to perpetuate this myth to promote chess in the wider world.

What is the best thing that was ever said about chess?

I prefer practical chess theses that also apply to life. 'The threat is stronger than its execution' (Tarrasch) comes to mind regularly and for a variety of reasons.

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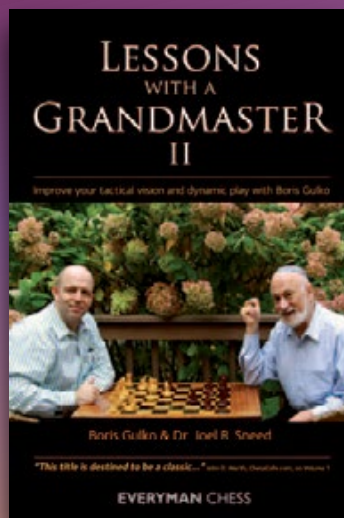
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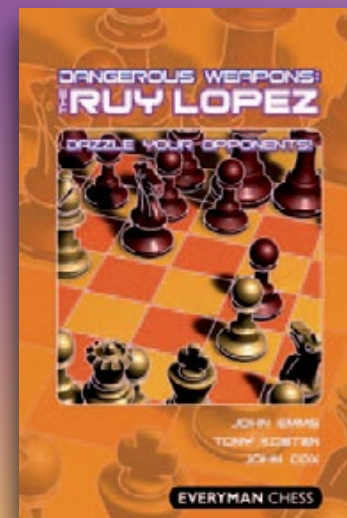
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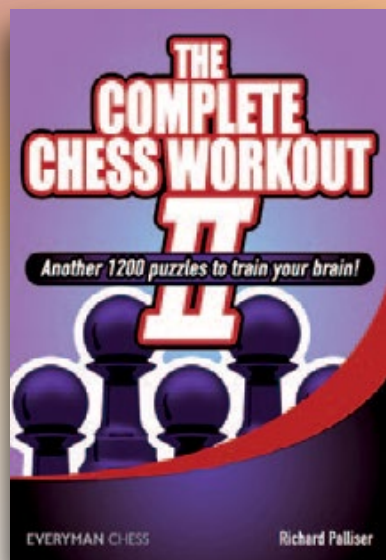
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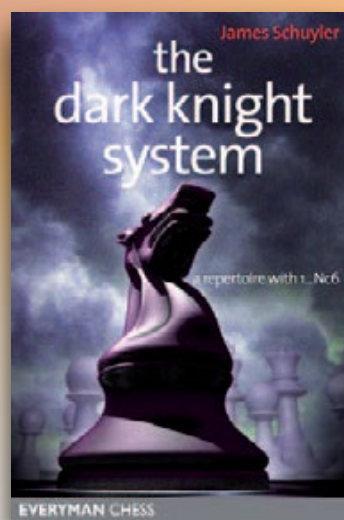
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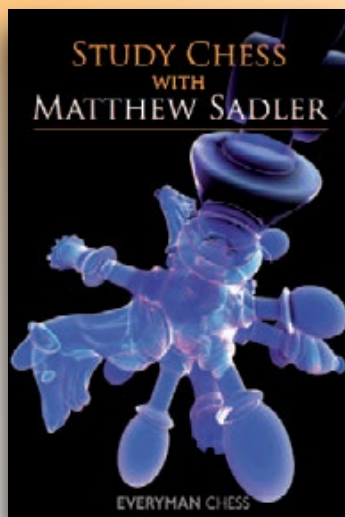
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